



# POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

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One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

EDITED BY THE

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“By it, he being dead, yet speaketh.”—PAUL.

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FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1856.



S E R M O N S ,

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S k e t c h e s o f S e r m o n s ,

F R O M

T H E P U L P I T .

B Y T H E L A T E

HENRY B. BASCOM, D.D., LL.D.,

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

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## Sermons and Sketches of Sermons from the Pulpit.

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### SERMON I.

#### THE TRUTH AND IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY, VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ADVENT AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”—HEB. i. 1, 2.

THE personal advent of Jesus Christ upon earth, forms an era in the history and hopes of mankind, eternally memorable. The eventful issues of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, have been *such* as no human foresight could *anticipate*, and no earthly power *control*; nor is it *now* within the imagination of man to trace their influence and bearings through the range of future generations, and the after-roll of ages!

Men and angels—heaven and earth may speculate, and variously essay to pry into the mystery of “God manifest in the flesh,” without arriving, in many aspects of the question, at satisfactory conclusions. But one thing is certain, the event and its issues *are*, and will *for ever remain* stupendous and imposing!

In illustration of this subject, we assume,

I. THAT THE TIME, IN WHICH OUR LORD APPEARED UPON EARTH, WAS IN EVERY RESPECT, THE MOST PROPER TIME, FOR HIS APPEARANCE.

1. That the fulness of time, for the manifestation of the Son of God, in human nature, had arrived, is inferable from the well-attested fact, that an unresisted, long-cherished expectation, had occupied the mind of nations, and prevailed throughout the world, that about this period, an illustrious prophet and deliverer would arise, who, claiming the sceptre of dominion, would everywhere change the aspect and current of human affairs. *Josephus* mentions this expectation with emphatic gravity, and strangely attempts to compliment his imperial master, by a most absurd, unauthorized application of it to *Vespasian*! *Suetonius*, writing about the same time *Josephus* did, makes distinct allusion to the same fact, in his *History of the Roman Emperors*. *Tacitus*, a historian of universal credit, notices the fact, with equal distinctness. And all three of these historians, speak of *Judea* as the birth-place of the expected deliverer, thus showing the absurdity of applying it to *Vespasian*. There are numerous passages to the same effect not only in Jewish, but in other Pagan authors, particularly in *Virgil*, but these will be sufficient to show, that the expectation in question, prevailed throughout the oriental world, and that the destined greatness of the expected personage, had become an object of solicitude, among all nations. Such an expectation, never prevailed before—never has prevailed since. No such state or period of preparation, belongs to the past—none is likely to be true of the world's future history. And hence, what period so proper for the birth of Christ, as the one actually selected? Thus furnishing a strong independent presumption, in favor of the truth of the gospel history.

2. *The fitness of this period, for the appearance of Jesus Christ upon the earth, is argued from the fact, that it is the time fixed by prophecy, for his advent.*

Moses had fixed the period, by declaring it should take place *before* the dissolution of the Jewish polity. Daniel had fixed it at a little less than 500 years after the date of his prophecy. Haggai and Malachi had both predicted the event *during* the standing of the second temple. All prophecy relating to the subject, had decided upon his coming *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, for he was to be of the family of David and tribe of Judah, and born in Bethlehem Ephratah; but since the siege of Jerusalem, the family of David and tribe of Judah, have not been known. This latter event completed the overthrow of the Jewish nation; all distinction of tribe and family ceased at once; and has never been recovered since. From all which, it is plain, that Messiah must have appeared at the time he did, or not at all. No future pretender, can possibly unite in himself, the distinctive marks of the Messiah, described in prophecy. Bethlehem Ephratah has been extinct for 1700 years, and if Messiah is not come, it is madness in Jew or Gentile to expect his coming. And hence another strong presumption, in favor of the truth of Christianity.

3. *The peculiar circumstances and character of the Jewish nation, at this period, rendered it the most suitable time for the coming of Jesus Christ.*

For several centuries they had been without a prophet or authorized instructor. The Jewish religion had accomplished its object, in exhibiting the providence, and preserving the knowledge of the one supreme God, in the midst of an idolatrous world. Two hundred years before this period, the Jewish Scriptures had been translated into Greek, which was then the language of the civilized world, more properly than any other. Hence, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were

accessible to the readers and thinkers of this polished age, in every region where the Greek language was known. Under the favor of the successors of Alexander, the Jews had established themselves in every considerable place and city throughout the Roman Empire. Their synagogues were everywhere tolerated; and they had numerous and enlightened proselytes, all over the world. Hence, any thing extraordinary, in their history or fortunes, might be instantly diffused to the ends of the earth, and the advent of the Saviour, could not have happened at a time, or under circumstances, more propitious, or likely to secure the spread and influence of his religion, among all the nations of the Eastern world. And an additional presumption of the truth of the gospel history, is thus furnished, by showing that had it not been *true*, its *falsehood* must have been exposed to the notice of the world.

4. *The corruption of the Jews, as a people, had by this time, clearly evinced the hopeless insufficiency of their economy, and demanded an utter—a redeeming revolution.*

The traditions of the elders, had rendered the law a nullity. The insane zeal of superstition, had usurped the place of every virtue, human and Divine. They were a community of corrupt, bigoted religionists—were enslaved by an unprincipled hierarchy—were run mad after rituals and forms, and such was their depravity, and the practical ungodliness of the nation, as represented at Jerusalem, that Josephus, their own historian, declares, had not the Romans come against their city, it must have been swallowed up by an earthquake, or overwhelmed by a deluge. Hence, even the mercy, not less than the justice of God, seemed to call for the overthrow of this corrupt peculiarity, and the introduction of a more liberal and spiritual dispensation. All these things loudly demanded the interposition of Heaven; and fixed attention upon this period, as the fulness of time for the advent of Messiah. If not at such a time, when could Messiah *fitly* appear?—Thus

adding another presumption to the scale of probabilities, that the gospel is what it purports to be.

5. *The moral and religious condition of the Pagan world, designated the time at which it occurred, as the most suitable time for the appearance of the Son of God.*

The progress of philosophical inquiry, had destroyed the influence of *Polytheism*, except with the lowest of the people. The fear of the gods had vanished, and with it, almost all sense of moral obligation. *Power*, wealth, and kindred causes, had rendered the millions of Rome selfish and effeminate. The stern and hardy virtues of the commonwealth were unknown, while vice and licentiousness were everywhere triumphant. In Greece, the worship of the gods was transformed into the *mode*, and their temples were notoriously *the theatre* of the most inconceivable profligacy; and in both, the remains of superstition existed, only for the more public encouragement of every form and species of moral and social infamy. In fact, the whole Pagan world, united the more dissolute and abandoned vices of an enlightened, luxurious age, with the more gross and sanguinary crimes of a ruder and darker state of society. Hence the importance, at *this* period, of a “light to lighten the Gentiles”—the masses of heathenism—and bring the Pagan world to a knowledge of the truth. Furnishing an *additional antecedent* probability, that the gospel is *true*.

*Finally. The intellectual progress the world had made, was such as to render it a suitable period for the introduction of the Christian revelation, accompanied, or rather introduced, by the personal ministry of the Son of God.*

It was the age of refinement and letters, and acuteness of philosophical investigation, beyond all that had gone before. The thinking part of the world, had proceeded far enough in general research, moral and physical, to discover the futility and absurdity of their idolatrous religion, and to reach the



utmost limits of unassisted speculation, without any thing on which to rest, in relation to the hopes or interests of immortality. The result of the varied conflicting labors of philosophy, appeared to be utter skepticism, on the most important subjects of human duty and expectation. The materialism of Epicurus and his school, was the fashionable philosophy of the more cultivated classes; and this supplanted the vague, irregular fears of a future state, by leaving the minds of all brought under its influence, without God, providence, morality, or retribution. Religion, with the master-spirits of the age, was nothing more than a popular, established folly, for the better control and management of weak minds, and the ignorant multitude. Meanwhile, their limited fragmentary attainments in philosophy, only excited a more ardent—an ever-restless desire for the full light of intellectual day. Under such circumstances, how important, that in the advent of a Teacher, so much needed, the Sun of righteousness should rise, and everywhere *gild* the *dark sepulchre* of souls, throughout the Pagan world! The whole induction thus tending to prepare the mind for belief in the Christian religion.

II. WE ASSUME, THAT THE FITNESS OF THE PERIOD, IN WHICH CHRIST CAME, DID NOT, IN ANY DEGREE, DIMINISH THE NECESSITY OF MIRACULOUS ATTESTATION AND SUPERNATURAL AID, IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PROPAGATION OF HIS RELIGION.

The very facts, which show the fitness of the time for the introduction of Christianity, are the very circumstances, which demonstrate, that it would have been impossible to establish it in the world, without supernatural aid. The state of things which rendered the birth of Christ so obviously necessary at this time, is the very state of things which proves that the power of God was exerted in the *origin* and *propagation* of the gospel. How astonishing the Divine foresight in this

singular juncture of human affairs ! How surprising, that the very circumstances, which most showed the necessity, and demanded the introduction of Christianity, prove that it could not have sustained its claims, and made its way in the world, except by supernatural means ! God selected a time for the introduction of Christianity, when man most needed it ; and yet when it was impossible for man to overlook the fact of its Divine original ! The proper proof and illustration of this position, will require, that we elaborate it in connection with each of the positions preceding it.

And 1st, then, the universal expectation of the Messiah, by Jews and Pagans, especially the former, led to his almost universal rejection. If you ask how, we answer, because with the idea of the Messiah, they had always inseparably connected the earnest expectation of a *princely*, a *temporal deliverer*, a *national head and leader*—the pomp and splendor of external royalty, and the triumphant subjugation of all their enemies ! Hence, when Christ came, the altogether spiritual nature of his kingdom, the heavenly-mindedness of his religion—his humility—his peaceable and unwarlike character, *dissatisfied* them, and proved *revolting*. His miracles, it is true, occasionally inspired them with *hope* and *ardor*, and then they shouted him *king*—the long-expected heir of David's line ! But soon, his powerful preaching, and the superior sanctity of his life, maddened them ; and then they cried, "*Away with him*"—and finally, the very populace that cried a few days before, "*Hosannah to the son of David*," followed him to the mount of crucifixion, with shouts of insult and disdain ! The rulers and priests had discernment enough from the first, to see he was not the Messiah *they* had expected, and rejected the idea without concern or regret ; but the common people—the multitude, who from time to time had anxiously caught at the manifestations of miraculous

power, were indescribably vexed and disappointed, when they saw him quietly submitting to *crucifixion* and *death*!

And thus we see that the true and insuperable objection of the Jews, to the reception of the gospel, was the humble, unpretending life—the shameful, ignominious death of its author. And we clearly perceive further, that the very expectation of a universal *Prophet, Priest, and Prince*, in the same personage, led to the rejection of Jesus Christ, in whom all these prophetic distinctions met with historical exactitude; but not in accordance with the dreams of the synagogue!

Whatever else the hopes of the Jews pointed to, it is entirely certain, they were *retributive* in relation to their oppressors. Rome was, at this moment, *dispensing bondage to a thousand nations*, the Jews among the rest; and *they* were impatiently awaiting the day—the hour, when vengeance should *requite* them, for the unpunished wrong of Rome! And Christ was rejected, because he did not appear a second David, or Solomon, or Maccabean hero, in the assertion of their victorious nationality!

2. *The prophecies, which had their completion in Jesus Christ, afforded but slender aid to his claims, when announced to the Gentiles; for the Jews were regarded by the enlightened pagans, as an exceedingly credulous, superstitious race; and among the Greeks and Romans, it could have been no recommendation, but rather disparagement to any personage, to have been pointed out in Jewish prophecy.*

They would have said with Horace, “Let the credulous Jew believe this;” and the classic sneer would have passed for demonstration. Their reasoning would have been as brief as conclusive—their prophets are of the same character, and of no more authority with us, than our own sibylline books and kindred oracles; and with regard to these, we all know, that Augur cannot even *look* at Augur, without laughing!

For Jesus Christ, therefore, to appear as the consummation of Jewish prophecy, was only to excite the prejudice of Greek and Roman, and attract contempt to his religion. A Jewish Messiah was the last whom they would have chosen as the founder of a universal faith. In *his* rejection, they would have boasted, among *themselves*, such men as Numa, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato. And all this actually happened in the instance of Greece and Rome, and the more polished nations of the East. Their literary and national pride, revolted at the idea of entering the school of a carpenter's son—a tax-gatherer—a horde of obscure fishermen, and Galilean peasants, associated for the purpose of reforming the world! In the eye of Paganism, therefore, Jewish prophecy tended to *disparage* rather than *enhance* the claims of Messiah, and rendered the arm of God the more necessary, to vindicate his mission!

3. *The very situation of the Jewish nation, which rendered the necessity of a new dispensation most evident, presented the circumstances most hostile to the propagation of Christianity.*

If it be asked *us how*, the reply is obvious. The corruption of their religion increased their bigoted attachment to it, inasmuch as in this state, it most favored their private vices and social degeneracy. Hence, the contempt for their traditions, *always and everywhere* manifested by our Lord—the noble and generous views of God and virtue he inculcated, and the moral purity, “internal and external,” he everywhere recommended, excited their most inveterate hostility, and, had this been the *only* revolting attribute in the character of Christ, it would most effectually have suppressed and overthrown his religion, had it been of merely human origin.

Again, the dispersion of the Jews, throughout the vast Roman Empire—“all the East,” at this period—though apparently a favorable circumstance for communicating and spreading a knowledge of the Christian religion, was yet, “all

things considered," a serious obstacle to such a result; for the same corruption—the same impiety—the same malignity, that impelled the ruler and the priest to crucify Christ at Jerusalem, existed among the Jews everywhere in their *dispersion*, and by how far it was brought to bear, (that is, *universally*,) operated as a powerful obstacle to the spread and triumph of the gospel among the Gentiles; and rendered Divine interposition the more necessary to such a result. The utter want, among the Jews, of such a religion as the *Christian*, indisposed and disqualified them for the reception of it, and showed Almighty interposition necessary to rend the veil upon their hearts, and subdue them to "the obedience of faith."

4. *The corrupt morals of the pagan world, which demanded a purer system, were, at the same time, extremely unfavorable to a system of such exact and uncompromising purity, as the gospel.*

The new religion condemned, as *hateful* in the sight of God, and a *debasement* of his image in man, the *very vices* to which the Gentiles were most enslaved; and threatened the punishment of hell to the very practices they had consecrated by making them a part of their worship, and recommendations to the favor of their gods! Their pompous, impure sacrifices—their idol-feasts—their sanguinary amusements—theatrical exhibitions, and favorite feats and fights of *athletæ* and gladiators, were all condemned and banished. In the midst of a luxurious, relaxed, selfish, and sensual age, the new religion called for the virtues of mortification and self-denial. Add to this, that it exposed its friends to contempt, persecution, poverty, ignominy, and often death itself. Such was the prospect it opened to the Gentile world; and how, think you, it was likely to be received among luxurious senators, vain literati, tyrannical prefects, military governors, lawless generals, and profligate consuls, with all their licentious favorites and followers! If then, the corruption of the world called

for the introduction of the gospel, this very corruption, from the emperor on his throne down to his dissolute slaves, was arrayed against it, in all the hardihood of the grossest depravity! And hence again, the necessity of supernatural power, in order to its spread and success. Under these circumstances, had it not been of God, the world would have given it *early* interment!

*Finally, the intellectual refinement of this period, operated against the reception of the gospel.*

It was, to be sure, the easier understood on this account; but not the more sought after, by any means. The established idolatry of the age, was looked upon by the discerning, as both false and foolish, but still, most valuable, as a creature of the state—an engine of civil power, and hence tenaciously clung to. Their latitudinarian philosophy led them to look upon all systems of religion as *alike indifferent*; and although they had no confidence in their *own*, yet their national pride and pampered passions, as well as *amor patriæ*, made them unwilling that it should be supplanted by *another*. If some of their sages had manifested laudable solicitude about a future state, and would be likely to embrace a revelation of the life to come, yet the *manner* in which immortality was “brought to light by the gospel,” coupled as it was with the general resurrection of the dead, and all resting upon the *declared* resurrection of one who had been *crucified*, seemed to them a most contemptible, if not impious absurdity. And accordingly, the wits, sages, and philosophers of this inquisitive, disputatious period, chose to remain as they *were*.

But further, there is one difficulty, originating in the refinement of the age, which the gospel never could have surmounted, had the hand of God not been engaged in its establishment. The Greek language was at this time spoken in its utmost purity, all over the Roman empire, and in other portions of the oriental world. Eloquence was everywhere culti-

vated, and immoderately valued; and nothing could *command attention*, but what came recommended, and was rendered attractive by the graces of composition and style. But the apostles were rude in speech, and unacquainted with the arts and appliances of popular address. Humble in aspect, poor in condition—fishermen or obscure craftsmen by occupation, and following a crucified Master, how could they succeed in the most polished part and period of the world! How are we compelled to adore the wisdom and the power of God! *He* was with them. They succeeded, by *the publication* of truths, that met with *irresistible approval* in the hearts of men—by *the presentation* of facts, that could not be denied—by the working of miracles, that no ingenuity could discredit. *These* truths, facts, and miracles, accompanied by the power of God—*such* an exhibition of the *true* and the *Godlike*, was enough! And the ignorance and idolatry of a world without God—the *throned abuses* of a thousand generations, sank and crumbled before the advance of Christianity, as she went forth, *making the circuit* of nation, tongue, and tribe, and destined to secure the conquest of the world!

III. WE ASSUME THAT THE MINISTRY OF OUR LORD, NOT LESS THAN THE TIME, PLACE, AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS ADVENT, AFFORD IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

The character of our Lord, as a Teacher, is without precedent or parallel, in the history of the human mind. His portrait, as furnished by the evangelists, is at once, and in every aspect, *superterrestrial*. As the representative of Heaven, at the head of the visible creation, he presents himself before the world, in all the conscious dignity of independent worth and virtue, without any wish or effort to provoke wonder, excite applause, or secure fame. We behold him sublime in conception, affectionate in manner, and fearless in address; meekly

conscious that God is with him, and that he and his Father are *one*. Verily the deputation, that visited him from the rulers and priests, had reason to exclaim, “never *man* spake like *this* man.”

1st. In asking your attention to the character of our Lord, as a Teacher, *we shall first notice the novelty and unexpectedness of his ministrations*. His teaching, both in matter and manner, was new and unlooked-for. This view of the subject will strike you the more forcibly, if you advert to the *expectations* of the Jews, and their settled *prejudices* on this subject, together with the philosophy of the Gentile world, and with *these* compare the actual ministry of the Son of God, arresting their attention. The Jews had long and fondly figured to themselves a *matchless Leader* of heroic daring and celestial power, who was to erect on the *hill of Zion*, the standard of revolt against the oppression of Rome—invested with robes of splendor and the ensigns of power, his banner was to lead them to national independence, and universal empire! The philosophy of the *Gentiles* had taught *them* to *respect* or *dread* nothing *short* of this. Now, the character of our Lord was in every respect a *contrast* to the expectations of the Jews, and by no means likely to be appreciated by pagan philosophy. In view of both, it was novel and unexpected, and the singular dignity and force with which he substantiated the claims of his Messiahship—in a way entirely new and without precedent, must strike all as a remarkable characteristic in his ministry, furnishing strong evidence of the truth of his religion, and the Divinity of his mission. What had the world ever seen before, like this? In *what* era, or *whose* person, had philosophy anticipated *such* a development of dignity and worth! At the very moment the impotent mob wished him to take the throne of David, and humble the haughty Tiberius—the human heart—“yours and mine,” was the only empire he aspired to rule, and a dominion more grateful to



him, than all the realms claimed by the world's imperial Master! He was not governed by the maxims of the synagogue. He did not borrow from the philosophy of the schools. The truth of what he declared, depended singly upon his own declarations, and the reasonableness of what he declared, was demonstrated by the light and lessons of nature and conscience. His language to the *jarring elements* and the *madness* of the demoniac, was the style of his address, in fixing the standard of duty and the terms of admission into his kingdom. His word is final, and the decision *given*, the alternative is absolute—"He that believeth *not*, shall be *damned*."

2. *The ministry of our Lord was original, in a sense and to an extent, not included in the idea of its novelty and unexpectedness.*

He had many a model before him, but he followed none. Moses and the long succession of prophets, had left their example. The darkness of Paganism had been lighted up with the rare and startling lustre of Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and Socrates. But *Jesus Christ* borrowed not a ray from these lights. *He travels across* this galaxy of illustrious names, like the sun of heaven, in all the brightness of his course—with a lustre totally unborrowed from them, and casting their feeble and collected rays into distant obscurity, by the mild but overwhelming power of his effulgence! Pointed out by all who had preceded him, he points to none. All his *inspired* predecessors had sought the diffusion of Judaism—he predicts its decline, and the coming splendor of a purer—a more exalted dispensation. Those who had gone before him, came with reserve and austerity, he presents himself without a shade of reserve. The Jews, among whom he appeared, were a formal, superstitious, priest-governed race, devoted to rites, ceremonies, habits, and traditions, unrivalled in exclusiveness and absurdity. Upon all these, Christ lays no stress at all,

but insists upon purity of heart and life, as the only worthy aim of man—and all this he does, under the character of the professed Messiah,—the cherished object of national expectation.

Contrary to universal apprehension, his kingdom was founded in holiness, was based upon benevolence, and excluded every thing selfish. *His* ministry, unlike all who had gone before him, made humility essential to greatness; and he made this virtue to consist, not in the debased appearance and squalid habiliments of the body—not in the expatriation of ourselves from the decencies of life, but in the disposition and affections of the heart toward God and man.

In his ministry, he did not aim at teaching religion, as a science. He did not resort to argument and ratiocination. He taught authoritatively, in plain didactic statement. He published the will and purposes of Heaven, not as a theory, but as a collection of most important verities, illustrated by facts, the credibility of which, was as certain as the truth of God and human consciousness could render them! All that Christianity has taught us, in the New Testament *records*, or subsequent *expositions*, is found in substance—in *semine* at least, in the ministrations of the Son of God.

3. *The sublimity of his ministry.* Full and fresh must be your perception of the marks of moral grandeur, distinctively ennobling every part of his ministry. We cannot, perhaps, logically express, but all must *feel* the perception—the *senti-ment* of the sublime in character and action—the awe of more than mortal endowments and virtues, whenever we address ourselves to the contemplation of his ministry. What greatness—what pathos—what Godlike benevolence and majesty of appeal, beyond the example or conception of all former ages! Nothing is truly sublime, but what is simple; that is, original, natural, and unaffected. And what more original, natural, and unaffected, than the ministrations of the Son of

God? The moral grandeur of independent integrity, is the sublimest object in the history of mind; and before which, the pomp of regal magnificence and the splendor of conquest, are paltry and perishing! Had Jesus Christ assumed the almost forgotten ensigns of hereditary royalty, in the Jewish nation; had he placed himself at the head of an oppressed, impatient people—had he confirmed his authority by visible, imposing prodigies—had he maintained his cause by supernatural achievements—established his court in the capital of Judea—and distributed robes and riches, crowns and palaces, thrones and sceptres; and had these been received by the disciples, in exchange for their nets and rods, and hooks and lines, and boats and hovels—the spectacle might have been more imposing, but in reality, would have been less sublime than the scene at the grave of Lazarus, the well of Samaria, or on the mount of crucifixion. Indeed, miracles apart, all this had been done not long before, and was fresh in the world's memory, by the Macedonian conqueror; yet no man even respects his name, while that of Jesus Christ shall live embalmed, and bear triumphant sway in the hearts of unnumbered millions, throughout all earth's coming generations! His ministry blended the majesty of God with what should be the meekness of man, and was alike distinguished by the most commanding dignity and the humblest condescension—mingling the might of Heaven with the glow of earthly pity, in the great mission of his love! And could earth—can *we*, debate the truth and urgency of his love, with the stupendous array of his miracles before us, and in presence of the very tears with which he wept the doom, not merely of guilty Salem, but of *all* who *reject* him—"How oft would *I* have gathered you, and *ye* would not!" *Could* Almighty condescension go *beyond*, or get *lower* than this?

Would to God, that in these respects, his ministers were more *like* him—more rigidly unyielding in their resemblance

to him! What would the world have thought of Paul's conversion—his dignity and sincerity, had he been seen, in the polished metropolis of Greece, offering homage to Jupiter, from *courtesy* to the crowd—accommodating his creed and bearing to the Stoic and Epicurean—joining the laugh against his Master and the story of his cross and resurrection, with the wits and loungers of the Acropolis—seeking admittance to the theatre and festival—looking in upon the olympic games and bacchanalian dance—had he been found with stroller and gossip, in search of something new in the forum and temple—had he blenched and apologized in presence of the rude insolence of the challenge, “What hath this babbler to say?” Had *such* been the manner of Paul in the matter of conformity to the conventional demands of irreligious society, about which so much is conceded by many of his reputed successors, think you he could have made that matchless defence before the Areopagus?—a defence, blending the force and earnestness of Demosthenes, with the majesty and inspiration of Isaiah—an attack which shook the temples of the national faith, and ended in the overthrow alike of the gods and mythology of Greece!

4. *Its authority*.—With what infinitude of right and claim—with what unlabored confidence and majesty, does he instruct an erring world! How independent and self-sufficient in his teaching! Priest, ruler, and populace, in temple, palace, or hovel, were taught in the *same* terms, and received the law from him, in the *same* sentence. Supreme and invincible, in power and purpose, his style of rebuke was direct, militant, and aggressive, with regard to all the forms of vice and error. With a *presence*, to which immensity interposed no limit—a *potency of will*, to which *all* things were possible, he said to the weary and the heavy-laden, “Come unto me”—“I will pray the Father for you.” In this way, he challenged the fear, at the same time that he reöpened the hopes of

earth, and pointed man to immortality in heaven, as the final reason of his mission to earth !

5. *Its consistency.* Every vicissitude of varying position or fortune, found him immutably the same. The same devotedness to God—the same tenderness for human misery—the same contempt of the world's scorn or malediction—the same meekness and self-denial—the same grandeur and tranquillity ! Whether they shout to crown him Lord of all, or clamor for his blood to be “on them and their children ;” *ours* is the conviction, which smote the heart of the *centurion*,—“truly this was the Son of God.” The consistency of our Lord's character, however, mainly appeared, in that he combined the efficacy of example, with the perfection of precept. His *life* embodied what he *taught*. All the virtues girded him as a zone, and showed his mission and his doctrine to be from God. Even in the greatest extremity of his humiliation, when earth had no form or color of execration—hell no shape or shades of blasphemy, *not* poured upon him ; he showed himself *alike* superior to the help or hindrance of earth ; and went forward, with unswerving determination, in “the work which the Father had given him to do.” How Godlike *indifferent* was he to time or place, or the external environment of things ! He consecrated every hour of time, as “in season” to do good. The mountain, the desert, the sea-shore, the ship, the wayside, beside the bier, the house of the dead, at the mouth of the grave, were as often the theatre of instruction, as the temple or the synagogue !

6. *The point, pertinence, and energy of his ministry.*

Unchanging in fidelity—unalterable in integrity, and fearless in impartiality, he addressed the virtuous and good, in the language of dignified encouragement and endearing simplicity ; while, to the vicious and abandoned, his lessons of reproof, gave imbittering foretaste of the dismay and anguish of the damned ! His soul melted and his tears flowed, at the unbelief and impenitence of the thousands he instructed, but

at the same time, his tongue flamed in the condemnation of their vices, with *all the terribleness* of Sinai's fires.

7. *Upon the effects of the ministry of Christ, we need not dwell.—They are known and read of all men.*

The world with its burden of nations—the infinity of its tongues and tribes, is the field white for the harvest of his sowing. His ministry contained the seed of all moral instruction, and however unnoted by us, the garnerers of the Church and the barns of God, are being filled with the produce! He came to destroy the works of the Devil, and the intense benevolence which prompted the mission, became the baptism of all his other virtues, including every act and purpose of his life! Almighty in power—infinite in resource, all was consecrated to the purposes of mercy and kindness, and in this benevolence, the conscious guilt and unsheltered weakness of a fallen world, are called to take sanctuary, and repose their hopes! His ministry *unsealed* to us the *fountain* of the waters of life, *only to deepen, to widen, and roll in our gaze*, until earth's last son shall "*drink or die!*"

Finally, *how unrivalled the grandeur of his ministry, judged of by the effects at which we have glanced.*

It is the great *centre*, around which revolve the hopes and destinies of man. Six hundred millions of mankind, may now read and hear its lessons, in their own language; and it is rapidly diffusing itself upon *unknown* shores, and preparing to bless *unborn* nations! All subsequent trains of Christian instrumentality are traceable back to this great source of primal emanation! To the *seed-plot* of *his* ministry, the world owes the entire harvest of Christian results! It is the standard and scale by and upon which, we measure and estimate the dignity and value of men and of nations—all objects and all events! His ministry, furnished the first fruits of immortality to man, and its light, has *ever since been radiating* to every section of the *dim horizon* of human hope and human fear!

IV AMONG THE REVELATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY, AS TAUGHT BY CHRIST, IS THE REQUIREMENT OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, IN RELATION TO THE THINGS SPOKEN, AS THE GREAT CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY TO ETERNAL LIFE.

His truth must be believed—his promises relied upon—his warnings heeded—his rights and honor consulted. He must be approached with the confidence, that the grace of faith and the power of obedience, are offered to *all*, as interested in the plan and results of his mediatorship. The true faith of Christianity, relates to the things spoken or revealed. The entire subject-matter of God's testimony—all the disclosures of his word, become the *subject* of credit and confidence. And not only is homage rendered to the truth of God, but the believer is quickened into a life of love and godliness, and enters upon a career of obedience and piety. Faith places the soul in a region of light and manifestation as it regards the things of God. The *mind* is brought in contact with all the urgent *motives*, and living *elements* of moral influence, found in the gospel. It embraces all the relations which attach to the person, and all the achievements identified with the reign of Christ. It implies reverence for the character of God, and trust in his mercy. All that is *awful* or *amiable* in the gospel, is received with grateful, confiding approval.

Justification is connected with the *merit*, and regeneration with the *grace* of the Saviour. The faith in question, involves you in a great moral struggle. You are called to *combat* with evil. Ignorance is to be enlightened—enmity slain—prejudice subdued—pride humbled, and passion overcome. All that is holy in heaven or good on earth, should be brought to bear upon our motives, and engage us in the warfare. Sin and hell have a joint field of empire and influence embarked against every one—all the *lost* of our race, who would return to God, in obedience to the message of his Son. "The power

of Satan," is that *from* which you are to be *turned*—"the power of darkness" that from *which* you are to be delivered. It is no array of imaginary evil, in the midst of which we find ourselves. We fight not only against flesh and blood—our own corrupt nature, and its vicious tendencies; but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses, or rather wicked spirits, in places both high and low. The cursed throne—the demon sceptre—the cruel mastery—the *vassal* millions of "the Devil and his angels"—of sin and hell, are the forces against which faith and obedience have to war! The first promise to man, was a prophecy of *ruin* to the powers of darkness—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." "Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil." He "spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly." As Mediator, he is invested with almighty sovereignty, that all things might be put under him, and his enemies become his footstool. Faith exhibits him, illustrious upon the *theatre* of the world, and over the whole *tract* of his mediatorship, for the purposes of conquest, over the powers of evil. Faith discerns in his death, a *deadlier* blow inflicted upon the kingdom of darkness, than any afterwards to be dealt, by the aggregate virtue of the world—all the men of all its generations!

The Godlike mysteries and simplicities of gospel truth, are received as the great and only remedy of our lapsed and ruined nature. Light and truth from the sanctuary of God, beam upon the understanding and renovate the heart. The word of God is deferred to—the Saviour loved, and the obedience of faith becomes the great absorbing concern of human life. The high character of an eternal interest, attaches to the profession of faith in Christ. The things of God are seen with clear and effective discernment. Faith brings to us the revelation and help of the Spirit and grace of God. Truth is brought to bear upon the mind with a manifestation and



energy, vitalizing all the virtues and graces. This is a result above and beyond the power of nature. No human means can overthrow the evil of our nature. Interest and friendship with Heaven can only be strengthened and extended by faith in the truth, and reliance upon the help of Christ, by which alone Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. The faith of which we are now speaking, must be taken, not merely in its *objective*, but also in its *subjective* relations. Not only must the truth of God be received in its widest and fullest generality, as a revelation, inclusive of every thing in any way essential to the happiness of man, but its application to us—its adaptedness to the exigence of our fallen condition, its power and efficacy, as a principle of action, operating a felt, personal movement of return to God, and consecration to his service—must likewise be taken into the account. In the *first* aspect, faith implies the belief of the truth—a knowledge of its objective lessons—the christianization of the mind, as preliminary to other equally important results. In the *second*, we have the great subjective change of renewal in the image of God, as it regards the heart and affections. Everywhere, and at every moment, he claims the homage and offerings of the one and the other! Communion with the infinite Mind, by means of the love and study of his word and works, and the exercise of the living virtues of Christianity, is the high ultimatum of faith. Faith as the great requisition of the gospel preparatory to human salvation, is not mere *intellectual* vision. The *moral* eye has to be opened, and assisted, *supernaturally* couched, and adjusted to the Heaven-furnished *prism* of Divine truth, as the *only perspective* in which we can have “the evidence of things not seen,” by the ordinary processes of thought and intellection! “With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness.” “God hath shined into our hearts.” Faith teaches—*reveals* to all, that they are alike heirs of a common immortality. All stand

related to the Infinite—are brought in direct relationship with the God and Judge of all. Every one within the range of the proclamation of the gospel, is challenged to the faith and obedience it requires, and is held responsible, in view of consequences, enduring as immortality. Intuitions of moral truth, vivid, commanding, and of sovereign force, summon you to action. Your relations with Heaven must be adjusted, and the interests of eternity cared for, whatever else may take place. Let the stars and the seasons—rivers and oceans—ages and generations—roll on—ebb and flow—appear and disappear,—“what is that to thee?” says the great Ruler of them all, “follow thou Me!”

Christianity is the only universal good. All men are the objects of its care. It belongs alike to either hemisphere. The dweller, the wanderer—the hut, the hearth—the homes and the haunts of humanity, as they spread out toward the poles, and on either side the equator, are all within the field of her mission! To all, without faith in Christ and Christianity, we say *believe*, and to the few who do believe, we preach *obey*. Thus blending the simplicity and practical sanctities of a holy life, with the sublime revealments of a lofty faith.

Do you meet the challenge of the gospel, by telling us you do believe? Truth and duty compel us to inquire, is this more than bare *intellectual credit*? Is it more than the *mind's assent*, to what it *cannot dispute*? And if so, what avails it? Have you forgotten the startling record, which tells you, that “devils also believe,” and, *unblessed* with the *curse* of *human hardihood*, cannot do so without “*trembling!*” But, we *will no more*. Let *reason* and *conscience* finish the induction!

V FINALLY, THE RECEPTION WE ACCORD, TO THE VISIT AND MESSAGE OF THE SON OF GOD, WILL DECIDE OUR CHARACTER, AND DETERMINE OUR DESTINY.

Connected with that visit and message, what unbounded

wisdom of plan and movement—what infinite energy of intelligence and action, are we called to contemplate! Helpless and without hope, *here* we are presented with a system of remedy including both, as we need. We are taught, that through faith in the great propitiation of the Son of God, man may be saved, while the justice of God and the sanctity of his law, *unimpaired* and *uncompromised*, are *upheld* in all the integrity of their exactions! *This* is the mystery of mercy—*such* the method of our recovery. The righteousness of God, made *our own*, through faith. Being “justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The entire nurture and provision of the *house* and family of God—the efficacious discipline of faith and love, are brought to bear, not merely upon our relations, whether to God or man, but upon the *force* and  *fervor* of the devout affections. Unconditional surrender to the influence of the gospel, is indispensable. Unsought and undesired on your part, Christianity can never save you. Christianity is God’s school on earth, to prepare you for residence with Himself, in heaven. All its elements connect directly with God and eternity, and all its tendencies are heavenward, and destined to receive their final expansion, in heaven *only*. To believe the gospel, is to *believe facts*, and faith in the facts, implies and *becomes* potential *in*, the production of every other virtue.

Ruin by sin—redemption by Christ—the gift of the Spirit—reconciliation with God—renewal in his image—are among the facts to which we allude. Faith teaches us from *what* we are saved—upon what *terms*, at what *cost*, and to what *purpose*. And hence, the corresponding virtues of humility, gratitude, dependence, hope, all leading to the practical results of confirmed and consistent piety.

The facts in question, are those upon which the *evidence of Heaven* has shone, and given them *entrance and lodgment* in the understanding and the heart, and with the *light* of

Christianity in the mind, and its *love* in the heart, we become prepared, "unto every good word and work."

It is a most interesting fact, seldom noticed, and still more rarely enlarged upon, that every doctrine, truth, or principle of the Christian revelation, calls for the implantation *within* us, and the exercise and display *in practice*, of some corresponding virtue; and whatever shades or obscures the one, must, of necessity, lower the tone, and reduce the value of the other. All the truths, graces, and virtues of the gospel, must meet and coördinate in the Christian—in *personal* Christianity. Man (God's word being true) cannot be saved by proclamation. He may bow to the *mandamus* of church authority—may glory in being covered by the *census* of the church, but the label and varnish of all its conformities, cannot give him a single virtue. Rome and Oxford together, with all the array and livery of their ritual adjustments and usurped jurisdiction, over the hopes and conscience of Christendom, cannot mend the temper, reform the life, or give a solitary virtuous impulse to the most abject of their vassalled adherents. True Christianity, is something essentially distinct, not only from mere church *organism*, but even from its *own instrumentalities*. The former has no grace to convey—the latter no life to impart—nor can all the wonder-fraught impositions—the deceptive blandishments—the mystic divinations of creed, code, or formula, *dethrone* even a single vice in the heart, much less "save a soul from death," or hide the "multitude of sins" cleaving to every one of us. The weight of innumerable offences is upon you—the gloom of a *thousand midnights brooding over you*—and *almighty* must be the virtue—*omniscient* the illumination, that can remove the one, and the other!

With the sinful habitudes of a fallen nature, rendered inveterate by habitual alienation from the claims and interests of the gospel, no combination of human power can avail in

your behalf. The influence of vice in all its forms—of all moral evil, is gradual and imperceptible. It gains power by the most ~~stealthy~~ insinuation. Sin does not enter by open breach or escalade, but by unnoticed means and methods, art and cunning, address and treachery; and before aware of it, the unsuspecting victim, like the wretched *Laocoon*, is writhing in vain to extricate himself. Vice has wound itself about the soul, until it is too late, and he finds himself *crushed in the folds of the serpent!* He cried peace, when there was none—now sudden destruction cometh as a *whirlwind*. He thought *but* of the *calm* and the *sunshine* of his lot, but *fear* and *dismay* come upon him like the *tread of the earthquake* beneath, or the approach of the tempest, *twirling* amid the abysses of the hills! How numerous, beyond number, are the instances coming within the *hazard* of this *fearful* category!

Look at the *living mass* of human consciousness and immortality *heaving* and *surging* in travail, about you—involved in the guilt of years of sin and wretchedness here, and looking forward to ages of remorse and darkness hereafter! The epitaph, of the *buried* pursuits and *perished* purposes which engrossed a life of sin, is *already written*—desolation within and gloom without; while all before, gives notice only of *despair* and *death!* Such is the fate, you are hastening to meet!

Amid the despoiled—the ruined grandeur of all earth's gilded hopes, you are stricken down in death, with the moan of despair—the wail of agony, and the heart's *last cry for help*, as the but too certain tokens of your doom! Alive to your destiny now, when it can be no longer averted, the light revealing it, is but the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, and comes upon you, as the lightnings of heaven wrap the midnight mountain in their glare! For defeating the mercy of God, in the offer of salvation, you have *chosen*

a destiny, under the retributions of which, *hell* is the only price at which repentance can be *bought*!

Upon the usual *inventory* of excuses—the ordinary *manual* of apologies, for postponing repentance, and the interests of a life of piety, it is not necessary that we dwell. (Absurd in themselves, degrading to you, ungenerous and insulting to Heaven—preposterously foolish, as well as ruinous, in bearing and tendency—frivolous and contemptible, *beyond all tolerance*, can they be presumed to extenuate guilt, quiet the upbraidings of conscience, or disarm the wrath of Heaven? Your existence, time, talents, influence, and treasure, all belong to God—to religion and mankind; and if not used and appropriated accordingly, failing to answer the end of your being, you become a curse to yourselves, and a plague to God's creation.) Let one of these excuses, sample the rest. It is the alleged *want of time*. No time to fear or love God—no time to seek him, or be religious! And what will be your plea, “*not long hence*,” when you will have no time to frame apologies for a course of folly that has led you to ruin—when death shall place his cold hand on the mouth, *open* to make its last excuse—and arresting the *lying* lip in the act of performing its hated office, shall *add one more* to the crowded congregation of the dead and the damned! How fearfully do these *shades* of the picture, contrast with its *lights*, recently noticed! And we fear, they are but too applicable, to many before us!

What have you *done*?—what are you *doing*?—what *shall* the *end* of these things be? The hopes of immortality squandered—the venture and value of existence, thrown away—the possibilities of a life of virtue, bartered for the trifles of time and sense—a state of danger and urgency, insanely transformed into one of unthinking carelessness! The chances and offer of salvation, exchanged for *eternal hopelessness of ever being saved*! Divine things robbed of

their interest, to be succeeded by the hell of remorse, and the perdition of final unbelief!—Infinite *address* and *contrivance*, under semblance of reason and argument, to throw away *the day of salvation*, without an *hour*, finally, in which to *recover it*, but an *eternal permanency of evil*, without the hope or possibility of change!—*Appalling* CLOSE, of a *life of sin*! No *type of darkness*, known to earth—no caverned gloom, in its *home of centuries*, can compare with this *night* of the soul, to meet which no dawn is approaching—*upon* which, no *morning* EVER *breaks*, in all the eternal future!

How infinite and urgent, the claim of God, upon your instant and grateful return to him! By what arithmetic, short of that of eternity, can you compute the guilt of refusing or failing to do so? With the means of rescue in your hands, and yet remaining in vassalage to sin and hell, how fearful must be your condemnation!

Do you always expect to trample upon the virtue of earth, and outrage the sympathy of heaven, by the neglect or rejection of the gospel?—Are we regarded as too urgent? Alas! he who feels *most* on this subject, feels *too little*! He who does not feel *all*, feels *nothing*! Fearful alike, are the gloom and the glory of our subject! And we hasten once more, as again and again *before*, to offer you hope, of which earth and time *cannot bereave you*—hope, which, like the kingdom and treasures we offer you, is not of this world! Could you but *see* yourselves, as God sees you, *such* prayer would reach his ear, *as Heaven has seldom heard from earth*! For what people, on the bosom of our sin-cursed world, has ever abused means and mercies beyond the measure of ours! And before God *can* forgive you, your *repentance* must be commensurate with the *depth* and *aggravation* of your sins. Christianity bids us tell you, the uplifted arm of the great Intercessor *is still raised to bless*, but, that it may *not fall in judgment*, the *next hour*, no *angel* dare tell you!

*Finally.*—It only remains for us, to *press the alternative*. Will you *receive* the things spoken *and live*, or will you *put them from you and die*? Will you hear and heed what God himself would teach you, by the mouth of his Son; or put it off, and at your leisure, learn the lesson in hell! Time is flying—death approaching—and the gloom of the future deepening around you! Will you embrace the feet of your Deliverer, resolved to *live or perish there*—or will you withhold from him the heart he claims, with all its fond pulsations, until the *affections are quenched for ever* in the *chill waters of death*! We but echo, and with feeble iteration, the things spoken by God, when we tell you—you *need* not die. Many *have* come, and *are* coming, but *space* and *welcome*, at the foot of the mercy-seat, give notice that “*yet there is room!*” Angels, *uniting with God and men*, bend from the walls of the heavenly city, and bid you not despair, but make another effort!

We see that effort making. It is an intense, mysterious struggle—the spirit’s most anxious conflict—the soul’s first fond interview with God, and from each disappointment, it returns with fresh ardor to the suit!

“What though my shrinking flesh *complain*,  
 And murmur to contend so *long*—  
 I rise superior to my *pain*,  
 When I am weak then am I *strong*;  
 And when *my all of strength* shall fail,  
 I shall, with the God-Man, *prevail!*”

“O that I knew *where* I might *find* Him—I would *approach*, even unto his *seat!*” He is not in the *thunder’s roar*—He is not in the *lightning’s flame*—He is not in the *whirlwind’s blast*—the convulsions of the earthquake, *bring him not*



*near! What remains to me? Sinai and Calvary—the Mount and the Garden—David and Paul, all leave me in darkness! And am I lost? It were so, but that “a still small voice,” steals on the ear, and floods the heart with rapture! It is the voice of a FATHER, and all who HEAR it, are his CHILDREN!*

## SERMON II.

## CLAIMS OF THE GOSPEL.

“We also believe, and therefore speak.”—2 Cor. iv. 13.

IF it be true that Christianity affords *some share* of *support* and *guidance*, to even the feeblest of her advocates, we are not left without hope, in view of the exercises upon which we are entering. That the *truth* and *inculcation* of the Christian religion—the specific nature and corresponding publication of the gospel, are the distinctive subjects of belief and utterance in the text, is a position too obviously certain to admit of doubt. Without any attempt, therefore, at proof or illustration, we shall, in the examination of the subject, proceed upon the assumption: and we thus introduce, at once, the topics and interests claiming attention at our present interview. The *full* and *felt* conviction, that any view of the subject we may be able to present, must necessarily be but a faint and shadowy duplicate of the great original, may discourage, but should not deter us from proper effort to this effect. Honest, earnest belief in the truth of Christianity *will* essay all *proper* methods—leave no suitable means unemployed, to impart to *others* the same conviction. The well-known fact, in the moral history of man, that those who know the *least* of what is *true*, are most likely to be influenced by what is *vague* and *doubtful*, seems directly to suggest both the *fitness* and *philosophy* of the great law of action found in the text, and its application to the subject in hand; and the interests engrossing us—  
“We believe, and therefore speak.”

Examining the subject, as we propose, we shall find ourselves in no dreamy, hypothetical region of mere speculation. We resign our convictions to the truth of the gospel, precisely and *only* in the proportion, the constitution of the human mind renders us incapable of resisting them, without offering violence to the higher laws and better impulses of the whole nature of man. Within the vast range of the information of ages, varied and boundless as it is known to be, humanity is without authentic claim or title to the reversion of immortality beyond the grave, except in the gospel. Be the gospel then *true* or be it *false*, *all* have a direct, ostensible interest in it, and those who *believe* it true, should know *why* they believe, and those who reject it are under equal, indeed manifestly greater obligation to know *why* they do *not* believe. If it be weakness to *believe* the gospel without evidence, it is certainly a far less excusable absurdity to *reject* it without evidence; and this, for the obvious reason, especially, that depravity of purpose and derelict motive, are much more likely to combine with the latter, than with the former. It is a question, at least, in which every expectant of eternity and its reversions, has an immeasurable stake, and no folly within the wide compass of human delusion or fatuity, can exceed that of refusing it a candid and careful examination.

The human mind is highly susceptible of two kinds of conviction, in relation to the gospel—one resulting from Divine influence, and the other from the force of evidence; each, but especially the union of the two, giving birth to the language of the text,—“We believe, and therefore speak.” The mind, under heavenly influence, may be divinely impressed with an irresistible conviction that the gospel is true, without any elaborate inquiry; or the student of the Bible may open his eyes upon the ten thousand highways of evidence, everywhere concentrating upon Christianity, and so reach the same conclusion.

The object of our remarks, on the present occasion, will be to vindicate the avowal of such a persuasion, from the imputation of weakness or inconsistency. And we commence with a very general, elementary view of the subject, as properly, if not necessarily preliminary, to the additional aspects in which we propose to consider it. Connecting then, our *belief* in the gospel with its *publication*, as antecedent and sequent, in the light of cause and effect, we believe and publish the gospel,

I. FIRST, BECAUSE OF A WELL-SETTLED, INTELLIGENT CONVICTION THAT, VIEWED AS A SYSTEM OF MORAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, IT IS OF DIVINE ORIGIN; AND AS SUCH, ENTITLED TO BELIEF AND CONFIDENCE.

The gospel is not, as assumed by ignorance, and charged by infidelity, “a cunningly devised fable;” but in origin and issue, a manifest exhibition of “the wisdom of God and the power of God.” It is not the offspring of human invention or discovery; nor yet the production of angelic intelligence. It did not originate in the prolific coinage, the trick and jugglery—the ever-asking, yet never-sated cupidity of an unprincipled priesthood; nor does it owe its existence to the craft and circumvention of satanic influence—the latent and unknown policy of hell, giving color and misdirection to the hopes and fears of earth. The nature and evidences of the gospel, in all its aspects, disown every such source; and although it has reached us from a fearfully sublime and mysterious distance, it has come to us with claims, and under circumstances, pointing to no earthly origin, or mortal source of origination—no equivocal descent from angel mind, or fiendish guile, but begirt and beaming with the inspiration of Heaven, and the illuminations of eternity! That it is the product of Infinite Wisdom—the will and mind of God revealed to man, is the great *postulate* we assume; and our *first*

and *last*, our full and *absorbing* conviction concerning it, is, that it is essentially of *Divine origin*—of celestial emanation; and as such, a transcript of the Divine nature and perfections, not less than an authentic narration of *how* Heaven has deliberated, and *what* God has done on the subject of human salvation. So viewed, the gospel is the history of God's mercy, and man's redemption—a most impressive exhibition of supreme excellence, and infinite condescension, blending the want and anxieties of earth, with the love and sympathy of Heaven; and should accordingly be hailed, as the hope of this world and the promise of a better! If we look at the gospel, even hypothetically, as a plan or system, and contemplate its existence, as an effect resulting from Divine goodness and unerring discernment—the all-perfect mind of God as its source and cause, we irresistibly find ourselves, whether Christian or infidel, in presence of an intellect and wisdom, so infinite in range and effulgent in display—Godhead and goodness so arranged in the attributes of light and love, that with a high and indefinite awe, we feel ourselves upon a scale of thought and action, above the achievement of men or angels! And yet, in this very system, or dispensation, we have an interest, commensurate, in magnitude, with all the hopes and fears of immortality! It is intended to *ally* man to God, by dissolving the fearful estrangement, and originating a bond of fellowship between them. Efflux as it is—a flowing forth of the essential wisdom of Deity—undoubted offspring of the everlasting Father—stamped with the signature of the God of nature and grace, and glowing with the vigor of his own vitality, it exists, at once the salvation of earth, and the joy of heaven, promoting the happiness of man on this side the grave, and inculcating the glories, and spreading the wonders of the name and love of God, amid the scenes, the visions, and the interests of eternity!

All this, however, is the language of statement rather than

argument, and not without design. The pulpit, like the apostle, in the text, announces, in the confidence of truth, the origin of its mission, without pausing to exhibit its credentials, at every challenge of ignorance or presumption. And it is not unlikely some of you may, at the very threshold of this high inquiry, turn away with philosophical indifference or vulgar disdain, not merely or mainly on this account, but because the inquiry, in its very nature, necessarily involves the supernatural and extraordinary—especially that, in the deeming of many, most unlikely of all classes of facts, called *miracles*. And this is done, perhaps, with the air and claim of superior discernment—of enlarged information, although the very act of doing so commits you to belief in a thousand miracles, and double the number of absurdities, utterly unaccounted for, by the laws of nature or the lessons of experience. While you may, therefore, in the lofty consciousness of your own wisdom, or the reckless temerity of uninvestigating ignorance, spurn the avowal, we are more than ever anxious to utter nothing but the truth, when we repeat,—“we believe, and therefore speak.” Such then, necessarily, is the issue between our belief, on the one hand, and your skepticism, on the other; and the light of the eventful present, and the destinies of the infinite future, must decide upon the right and the wrong of the one and the other!

II. WE BELIEVE THE GOSPEL TO BE THE ONLY ADEQUATE SYSTEM OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS, EXTANT AMONG MEN, OR IN ANY WAY ACCESSIBLE TO THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING; AND HENCE WE TEACH AND INCULCATE ITS TRUTH AND ITS LESSONS.

The truth of this proposition, we infer from the unquestionable—the demonstrated incompetency of the unaided powers of man to form such a system: also from the known condition of man as a lapsed intelligence—a subject of sin

and death. And finally, from the known universal condition of the heathen world for ages, destitute of the gospel.

*And 1st, the unaided powers of man, are at fault, in every essay, to form such a system.* It is said of Socrates, the great apostle of pagan morality, that, wearied in the vanity and vexation of philosophical research, he declared that in morals, there is no such thing as *human* wisdom, but only weakness and folly. And why marvel that he thought so, when he saw the whole pagan world literally immersed in fable and buried in crime!

And who that is but tolerably conversant with the moral history of the world, can help feeling that the maxim of the despairing sage, is accredited by universal experience! And Plato, the next best authority in the heathen world, declared his conviction, that until some Divine Teacher descended from his native skies, no sure and tangible information could be had respecting either man's duty or destiny. But, on this topic, as you may prefer the evidence, we select *you* as our witnesses. Have you not essayed to form and accredit to yourselves, schemes and systems of virtue and happiness, unlike, and even opposed to the gospel, without, it may be, directly and conclusively rejecting it? Have you not wanted in waywardness of thought and the caprice of passion, and yielded to their cherished obliquities, as the promptings of virtue and the categories of truth? Have you not appealed to multitudinous nature—invoked the unknown, and interrogated destiny? Anxiously have you tried to spell the name of the unknown God, and learn the plans of his providence, from the rhyme and the rhythm of the heavens, or in *numbering* the multitude and *surveying* the immensity, that you might *ponder* the language and *unriddle* the meaning of the stellar and planetary hosts, as the *alphabet* of infinity! And failing here, how often have you descended to earth, gazed on the grandeur of her mountains, and listened to the roar of her rivers—looked deep into

her abysses, as highways to her centre; or opened an ear upon her ocean-cataracts and thundering cascades, that seemed to shake the poles! But all these influences together, the heart's casuistry—the poetry of passion, and the bolder shapings of infidel and atheistic thought—the thunder's voice—the lightning's flame—the groaning tempest and weeping shower—the jewelled pomp of the heavens above, or the darkness and solitude of earth beneath—all *these*, can they throw any light on your actual moral condition—explicate the law of sin and death, or teach you how to honor and meet the God who having made, has never ceased to care for you? On this topic, the heart's disappointment and regret, its memories and remorse, will *bear us witness*, and *answer truly*!

But we return to the heathen world. *That the condition of the heathen world was one of utter ignorance and hopeless depravity, is shown—1st, from the absurd and senseless superstitions of pagan nations generally, and their impure and nondescript rites of worship. 2d, from their shamefully unnatural and anti-social civil institutions, as well as defective and revolting morals. 3d, Their contradictory and uncertain—their bewildering and unsettled conjectures, in relation to futurity.*

*And 1st, look at the worse than blind—the pestilent superstition, and insane worship, of the pagan world at large.*

Guided only by the light of nature, or rather their own dreaming and vicious inclinations, the notions of pagan antiquity early commenced, and were soon found under the dominion of their gross religious errors. At first it would seem, that idolatry, naked and unassociated, in instances of rare and commanding attraction—the sun and the hosts of heaven, for example, engaged attention and engrossed religious affection. Soon, however, the heathen nations imperceptibly fell into the vices of a more extended and corrupting polytheism; and soon after, by the gradual process of a most fearful



degeneracy, into all the disgusting puerilities of not only idol, but image worship; and the besotted pagan was finally seen, not only at the shrine of Jupiter and Juno, Neptune, Apollo, and Hercules, but dignified immortal man, such at least by the charter of his being, in the shameless dishonor of all the attributes of his nature, bowed down to the ox, the goat, the onion—the serpent, the monkey, the dog, the crocodile,—and there continued in *fervid* and *fatiguing* devotion, worthy a nobler creed and a better cause.

Add to this, that the worst of men and their most abandoned passions were deified, and even devils were adored. Look at the Aramones of the Persians, figuring so conspicuously in their philosophy and religion—the Lacodemons of the Greeks, and the Vejoves of the Latins, all of which were infernal divinities, by their own showing, and the worship of them intended to deprecate their malignant visitations, and thus conciliate the friendship of devils, which, but for their fears, had never been!

Look at superstition, with the watchful care of the alchemist, eagerly raking, with exulting ignorance and adoring stupidity, from the quivering entrails of bird and beast, the will and law of Heaven! Witness the Romans and the Druids, and the gory ritual of their bloody temples and primeval forests! Indeed, the best of the divinities among pagan nations, were as degraded as the mass of their worshippers. Even Jupiter, the supreme divinity of the heathen world, in the sublime brutality of his godlike excesses, as sung by Greece and echoed by Rome, was but feebly, tamely typed, by the refined voluptuaries of the one, or the imperial debaucheries of the other.

And if this should not satisfy you, take another view—unmask still further, the temples and worship of Paganism—let your eye take in Dagon and Ashtaroth, stretching their scaly mongrel length, to receive the homage of the devotee—Moloch

and Juggernaut, extending their molten arms to encircle the writhing victim, literally roasting in their grasp. See scientific Egypt, worshipping the reptiles on which she trod, and the vegetables on which she fed ! Imperial astronomic Babylon, bowing down to her hundred graven images, on the banks of the Euphrates or the plains of Dura ! Survey and estimate, if you can, the enormity of these public shambles of hell, with their fearful tissue of outrage, wrong, and blood !

And finally, look at the interminable mythology of Greece and Rome—a mythology improbable, impossible, and revolting, viewed only as fiction and fable, and yet swaying in absolute subjugation, the minds of more than two hundred millions of human beings, for centuries together ! Look at all this, and then ask yourselves, to what extent you are indebted to the gospel, for the correction of such a state of things !

2. The *civil* institutions of Paganism (institutions always, in any country, presenting a people in their most redeeming aspects) not only tolerated, but sought to generate vice (such at least in the eye of Christian jurisprudence) of every shape, and color, and size, including assassination, suicide, implacable hatred of enemies, social-infidelity of every kind, the utter degradation of woman in the social scale, the burning of children, and the murder of slaves ! These were all taught in their public laws, formed a part of their municipal and national codes, and were exemplified in conduct, with the most brutal *emphasis*, and a *universality*, almost incredible ! And thus, with no other restraints than those of Paganism, the world everywhere became a vast *Aceldama*—a boundless field of blood and death ! The whole mass of deluded heathendom is spread out before you, abandoned to error and embroiled in crime ; while, the *religion* of Paganism, is seen, at best, a gloomy grave-lamp, glaring on the mansions of the dead ! St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, sketches the portrait with the hand of a master ; nor, if you prefer them,

do Tacitus and Suetonius—the interested representatives of those they describe, lighten much the shades of the picture! Ovid, Juvenal, and Perseus, whether as witnesses or examples, are a host in themselves, on this subject. Even the classic Horace, as every reader of him knows, obscures his genius with samples of the most shameless indecency, and the more elegant pen of the polished Virgil, but too often sullies his pages with the most offensive impurity, to use no stronger language. Homer, Herodotus, Aristotle, and others, might be instanced; for the evidence from Greece, is to the same effect with that from Rome. In a word, until the gospel appeared, to dispel this fatal delusion of ages, the heathen world at large, in all its divisions, epochs, centuries, and generations, was sinking in vice and crime, as the reputed glory of life, and finally in death, as the extinction of being, without hope and without God, unnumbered, unnoticed, and untold!

*Finally. Futurity* was to paganism, like the chaos of Moses—the genesis of creation, “without form and void.” All was doubt and darkness—“confusion worse confounded.” Even the immortal Homer and Cicero, with their half-heavenly dreams, could form no satisfactory conjecture of a future state; and the devoted, lamented Socrates himself, drops his philosophy in death, and turns to Esculapius; while ignorance and presumption, everywhere made drunk with fear and folly, wandered on in darkness, doubtful of their course and uncertain of their doom! The millions of Paganism were guided only by the remnant of reason their follies had left them; and the shadows of death extinguished its torch, and hope expired at the mouth of the grave! This state of things was anticipated and corrected by the gospel, and the darkness and evils of the one have been superseded by the light and blessings of the other. It is by means of the gospel only, that hope and forgiveness, connected with God and the future, have found their mysterious conveyance to the sinners of our

race; and resulting, as a grand speciality from the Divine purposes, and acts of heavenly ordainment, the gospel comes to man, part and parcel of the constitution of eternity itself, and is as securely unalterable by human caprice, or hellish hate or fraud, as the Almighty mind in which it had its birth; and luminously disclosing to all, what reason was unable even obscurely to teach to a few, *the primeval intentions*, and *high preërdinations of Godhead*, connected with human destiny, it is in the very nature of things, most vehemently pressed upon our notice, as preëminently worthy the attention of those to whom it is sent. And when received and clung to with faith and affection, the light of immortality is felt *breaking in upon the gloom* of our hopes and fears, like a heaven-kindled aureola, amid surrounding darkness!

III.—THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE GOSPEL EXHIBITS THE IMPRESSION OF THE HAND OF GOD, AND FORCIBLY DEMONSTRATES ITS DIVINE ORIGINAL.

The view of the subject we now propose, beside the varied depths of taste and tenderness, and wedded themes of *intense* interest and *endless* variety, belonging to the *general subject*, will embrace more distinctively, the *doctrines and duties*—the *faith and ethics* of Christianity. The *former*, as we have seen, furnish us with a most luminous, graphic exhibition of the *character* of God, his *plans* and his *purposes*; and the peculiar adaption of the *latter*, to the *condition* of man, and the wants and capabilities of his nature, is a striking—a *standing* argument in favor of the truth and value of the gospel; while both, in their connected and coincident evolution, bring glory to God and good to earth.

The principles and elements of Christianity, viewed in connection with the entire system of moral relations, are high, paramount and subordinating. Vitally related in all its parts, the gospel must be received as a system, perfect in itself, and

uncombined with *any*—*every* other. All its parts will be found in a state of essential interdependence. You may apply analysis, but not for the purposes of division and selection. You may bring to bear upon it the calculus of a most rigorous induction; but it must be upon its reception or rejection, as a whole. You cannot believe availably without obeying; nor obey without believing. God will be honored by means and methods of his own appointment, or not at all. You can only escape the hell of the Bible by seeking the heaven it reveals. You cannot decimate Christianity by compromise, and enrich yourselves by the plunder. The alternative presented, is, that you receive or reject the system *entire*. Christianity reports to you in detail, the fall and recovery of man—his primeval condition and subsequent fortunes. She spreads out the whole range of intellectual truth and moral discovery, in luminous subordination before the eye of faith and reason; thus furnishing you with a knowledge of God, and the avenues that lead to him; but she has, at the same time, armed this very knowledge, with the most fearful retributive power, to execute vengeance upon you, if misapplied or abused.

*But*, you may claim to have much valuable information on the subject of religion and morals, independently of the gospel. Were the trial made now, it would perhaps be impossible to say, what the religion of nature could accomplish in any conclusive view of the subject, *absorbed and obscured* as it is, by the superior illumination of the gospel. In the hands of infidel philosophy, it is now only seen in *borrowed* livery, and is in fact, rich from what it *steals*—plucking the fruits of heaven on paths that lead to hell! But take the religion of nature, before the introduction of Christianity, when revelation as to its documents was confined within the walls of Jerusalem, and its light within the national precincts of Judea, and thus fairly estimate its value.

Then it possessed every possible advantage. Unmanacled, unmodified, uncolored by the gospel, she was free to avail herself of *all* her native vigor, and circumstances favored the experiment. Reason, full-orbed, rode high in the noon of her glory. Philosophy sat quietly throned in the zenith of power, and science, unveiling the splendor of her conquests and wonders, was progressively illuminating every region of the discovered globe! What natural religion could accomplish, under these fairest of circumstances, we have just seen, in our review of the moral condition of the pagan world, and amounting to an utter negation, in every final sense, of every thing available to the purposes of human happiness. Indeed, all the dazzling lamps of worldly wisdom clustered in a blaze, gave but a dim sepulchral glare, and darkness was upon the face of the world, *palsying* the intellect, and *blighting* the hopes of nations! But in the light of the gospel, the eye kindles in brilliance, over the whole living landscape of good and evil; and the wonders and phenomena of the moral universe, are seen in the colors of truth and nature! The religion of nature, therefore, only desiderated what we needed, and the gospel furnished the solution. Nature uttered the cry for help, but the prayer was answered by Christianity!

IV —THE EVIDENCE, AVOUCHING THE REASONABLENESS, CREDIBILITY, AND CONSISTENCY OF THE GOSPEL, IS TOO STRONG AND CONCLUSIVE, TO ADMIT OF REFUTATION; AND THEREFORE RENDERS ITS REJECTION ABSURD.

This evidence, is applicable to the gospel, 1st, with reference to *the great outline of its supernatural pretensions*. 2d. What it *reveals and teaches*. 3d. What it *requires, as it regards the nature and performance of duty*.

And 1st, its REASONABLENESS. If we look at the gospel, as a dispensation of mercy—a system of recovery in relation to man, and then turn to the *nature and fitness of things*, as

implicated in this inquiry, we shall find ourselves compelled to admit, that the *origination* of such a dispensation—the bestowment of such a system, is not only abstractly possible, but consistently practicable, beyond all doubt. 1st. The actual condition of man, as a moral being, in every possible aspect, imperatively required it, and rendered such an interposition, every way necessary. 2d. The essential benevolence of Deity, inclining him to clemency, directly increases the strength of the probability, that he would interpose the supernatural help so emergently called for, by all the interests of life and immortality, connected with our common nature. 3d. The necessity of a special revelation from Heaven, was felt and admitted by the most enlightened heathens of antiquity, such as Pythagoras, Seneca, Socrates, Xenophon and others. 4th. And competent in itself when given, to achieve what man most needed, the bestowment of such a system, appears infinitely reasonable, and gave birth accordingly, to the expectation that it would be received.

If disposed, on what are considered *rational principles*, abstractly; or merely philosophical dicta, to *except* to any part of the Divine conduct, as brought to light by Christianity, whether involving moral or physical facts, the difficulty may be met by showing, that it is quite as easy to vindicate the reasonableness of Christianity against all the captious cavilling of skepticism, as any of the ordinary dispensations of Providence, or arrangements of nature—the existence of evil—the prevalence of want and suffering, for example—the alternations of day and night, of summer and winter—of peace and war—of plenty and famine—health and sickness—life and death, with their endless complication of apparently adverse and antagonistic principles and interests. So far as the *primary* reasons and *final* causes of the Divine conduct are concerned, (and their *application to details* cannot affect the argument,) a most convincing analogy is observable, through-

out all the works of God ; whether in the kingdom of nature, providence, or grace ; and in the field of fact and induction, they occupy, as conceived of by us, precisely the same position and relations.

Universal nature exhibits no *facts*—her philosophy furnishes no *data*, contradicted by the gospel ; and he who staggers at the one, will find himself confounded by the other. The religion of nature undefiled and unseduced by infidel sophistry, is the friend and ally of Christianity ; attesting its premises and endorsing its conclusions. Christianity violates no principle of nature—tortures no feeling of humanity, she requires only the mortification of what is depraved—the crucifixion of what is sinful. Her worship is simple and uncostly—her altar the heart—her incense contrition.—She asks no victim, but an ungodly life ; and the only slaughter she demands, is that of vice and immorality. And taking into the estimate, the extended scale of moral interests and moral relations, what is there *discrepant* or *unphilosophical*, in all this !

2d. *The credibility of the gospel, whether historic or intrinsic, is supported by every kind of evidence, ample in amount, which can possibly be brought to bear, upon any similar question.*

If the value of evidence, can be augmented by the multiplicity of its kinds and forms, we have ten good reasons for believing the genuineness and authenticity of the gospel, to one for such belief in the works, say of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus—of Homer—of Cicero—of Xenophon, or any other author of equal antiquity with the gospel. We go farther. He who thinks he can produce the fiftieth part only the amount of evidence—contemporaneous and continuous, from age to age, in proof of the authenticity and credibility of, say Cæsar's Commentaries, that can be produced to the same effect, in favor of the gospel, will find himself mistaken. When the illustrious Johnson, the Seneca of the English



nation, was dying, some of his infidel friends, sought from him, a direct or constructive endorsement of their anti-christian philosophy, but the better-informed sage, struck them dumb with horror, by the indignant affirmation, that there was tenfold stronger proof of the death of Christ upon Calvary, than of the death of Cæsar in the capitol of Rome! He who rejects the gospel, will find himself committed to the accomplishment of much more, perhaps, than he intended. He must, if he would maintain even the *show* of consistency, by such rejection, lay aside every reliable principle and maxim of historical credibility; and in doing so, reject the whole range of allowable *criteria*, by which we decide upon the claims of any author or work, only three hundred years old. Adopt the maxims and data of infidel logic, as it regards Christianity, and to give point to the argument, apply them to Newton's "Principia," and two hundred years hence, no man on earth—under heaven, would be able to prove its Newtonian origin; or that it is not the production of John Bunyan, or Daniel Defoe! But, in addition to the direct, external evidence of Christianity, we have abundant internal philosophical evidence, beside corroborative relative proof. Viewed in this aspect, of the truth of the gospel we have the most convincing *prima facie* evidence—its very face and contexture prove the high and undoubted source of its origination, by furnishing invincible probabilities, against a contrary supposition. Christianity does not, as suggested by her libellers, offer a premium for belief in absurdities and impossibilities. She affords fair and advantageous exercise for all your powers of research and comprehension. She would invite to a trial of reason, were it only to show you how weak it is, and especially in fields of discovery, where she alone can furnish the data! In a word, the different classes of evidence in support of the gospel, unite like the component quotas of a confederate

army, each supporting the position it was appointed to sustain, and all conducting to a conclusion, triumphantly irresistible!

The elements in this complication of evidence, are indeed various; but all are found to converge to the same determinate point, just as each associate or successive ray from the sun, blends with the rest, and loses its identity, amid the undistinguished fields of a common radiance!

*Christianity is consistent, with all that is known of the character of God, or found to be true, in the condition of man.*

Its self-consistency too, in view of its multiform parts and elements, is equally striking; and cannot be overlooked, except by the stupid and disingenuous. There is a mysterious, and yet forceful appositiveness, belonging to every part, in relation to the rest; and the agreement pervading its whole correlative structure, is as perfect as it is surprising. We know of but a single test, in view of which, Christianity can be convicted of inconsistency, by her enemies. It is, indeed, inconsistent with their rashly adopted, would-be opinions, their lives, and their habits; and this, in fact, we cannot help believing, is the secret of their hostility; and renders obvious the philosophy of their aversion! By this standard, Christianity must always suffer disparagement. No compatibility between the one and the other, can ever be established. But between Christianity and all that is great, or good, true to nature, reason, or conscience, in the universe of God, the agreement is perfect—the consistency entire! There is about it the most surprising, picturesque unity, and nothing is more certain, than that the gospel, whether of earthly or un-earthly origin, is the offspring of the agency and dictation of *one* predominating mind. Its facts are essentially integral. They are the grouping and calculated contrivance of an exclusive individual master intelligence. No possible severity

of scrutiny, can detect even a single violation of unity, in the extended series of Divine interpositions, for the redemption of man; and regarding these, in the light of a continuous dispensation, they appear as consecutive graduated stages, in the evolution of one vast and comprehensive purpose. Christianity, therefore, whether viewed as the production of men Divinely inspired, or in a high and peculiar sense, the offspring of the infinite Mind giving birth to nature, must be looked upon, as the elaborate realization of a single pervading idea—"life and immortality brought to light by the gospel!"

V THE ABSTRACT TRUTH AND RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL, HAVE BEEN STRIKINGLY CONFIRMED AND ILLUSTRATED, IN THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, FROM THE EARLIEST EVOLUTION OF THE FIRST, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND, DOWN TO THE DATE AND TIMES OF OUR OWN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE.

Christianity in all time, and wherever promulged, has shown herself to be, what she originally and distinctively professed to be, a revelation from God. Ages and generations, with their interests and developments, come forward and offer proof, that in plan and issue, Christianity has exemplified all her high pretensions. Examine her on the score of her myriad prophecies—of her thousand promises, and in reference to her many and fearful threatenings, and in all, you will find her faithful to the assurances she originally gave the world. Look at *prophecy*, disclosing in the most luminous and graphic manner, the secrets of *unborn* and *unrelated* ages! See its genius, as wrapt in the vision of ascending years, it foretold the future fortunes of the Church and world! And facts and results, have been in consonance with the predictions. Her *promises* relate principally to the ful-

filment of prophecy, in the redemption of the world, and its future, final renovation; and their accomplishment, has been coincident with the progress of the world's history. Her threatenings are confined to the enemies of Messiah's reign—of God and virtue; and who does not fear their truth, and dread to taste its final manifestation! Heaven above and hell beneath abound with witnesses, and we arraign *you* to the same effect. It is attested alike by the songs of the blest and the groans of the damned—by heavenly vision about the throne of God, and the lurid irradiations of hell, mantling *the ruins of immortality*! Christianity comes to us too long and too well accredited, to dread invalidation now, from the assaults of infidelity or the sorceries of skepticism, whether vulgar or philosophical. It has shown itself true as God is true, and momentous as eternity!

The Bible, claiming a substantive existence in its *elder* divisions, is the most ancient intellectual monument of human exertion. It is, by near a thousand years, the oldest literary offspring of the human mind. Its youth had no contemporaries, and all its earlier rivals are long since dead; and yet in all the vigor and ripeness of unfailing manhood, it is still going forth aggressively, in the daily multiplication of its disciples, and the nightly dispensation of its blessings, “conquering and to conquer!” The gospel is at this moment, as *godlike* in structure, as *rich* in its hopes, and *sublime* in its revelations, as at any former period. It opens up a pathway of communication between a world of tears and toil, and one of songs and gladness; and strews the path of this communication, with living and countless proofs of its power and efficacy! It has invested each succeeding age with increasing splendor, and handed over to the recording angel of Heaven, the names of its converts in a ratio, that has struck the heart of infidelity with alarm, and the hopes of hell with horror! Such is the present position of

Christianity. Although the tapers of her illumination, burnt faint and few, for ten long and tedious centuries, yet the smoking flax continued to emit the interrupted radiance of its flickering flame, until the world was called upon in astonishment, to gaze on the grand beacon-fires of the Reformation, lighted up upon the mountains of Catholic Europe, resplendent as the blush of morning, and *victoriously* diffusing the light of life, and the savor of its influence, among the lost and the wandering, of every lip and every name !

VI. WE BELIEVE AND PUBLISH THE GOSPEL, BECAUSE ITS PROVISIONS ARE NOT ONLY ADEQUATE TO HUMAN WANT, BUT EXTEND, AS SUGGESTED BY REASON AND THE RELIGION OF NATURE, ALIKE TO ALL.

The whole and every part of the argument we are conducting, tends alike to this ; and we shall not *dwell* upon it, but would, at the same time, give it such distinctive prominence, by the way, as to prevent its being overlooked. Religious *exclusiveness*, which *enjoys* only in the proportion it is able to *curse*, has indeed attempted a *monopoly* of even eternal life itself, and the torture of its ghastly logic, has accordingly brought its paltry line, to bear upon the *extent*, and adjust the *limits* of boundless grace ! Measureless, however, and unconfined, as the air and light of heaven, you might as well attempt to *imprison* the one and *enchain* the other, as restrict its nature to a few, or limit its provisional range to a party. Like air and light, it belongs to *the world*, and shall *enlighten*, *encircle*, and *subdue it* !

VII. THE GOSPEL FURNISHES DIVINE CONVICTION OF ITS OWN TRUTH.

The gospel contains, as you know, ample promise of Divine influence ; and its provisions are to the same effect. The ear is opened to discipline, and the heart inclined to God and

virtue, by the predisposing power of heavenly influence. There is not only a beaming and presiding intelligence in all the pages of the Gospel, but the mind is directly illumined, and the heart affected by light from Heaven. God, who in creative might, at the birth of nature, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath, with *pervasive* effectiveness, shined into our hearts. Illumination is thus shed upon the mind, and susceptibility given to the heart—the one is enlightened and the other entendered, and the expansion of the mind and enlargement of the heart, resulting *from*, correspond *with* the light and influence Divinely imparted.

That this impartation of supernatural aid—of transhuman ability, and high moral invigoration, entered into the original design of God, in the gift of the gospel, is clearly inferable from the Divine conduct. But how shall we specify? *Selection* becomes difficult, from the *number* and *force* of the *proofs* and *instances*, crowding upon our notice at every step. Look at the many and marvellous manifestations of Deity, and the glory and excellence of his religion, to the favored chosen of God in ancient time! Look at the Heaven-attested faith of Abel, and the death-despoiling rapture of Enoch and Elijah! See Heaven in audible communication with Noah! Witness the gracious conferences between the “Father of the faithful,” and the Object of his faith! See Jacob in the wilderness, in chapel with his God! Listen to Moses in the mount, in dialogue with Heaven! Isaiah felt fire from off Heaven’s own altar glowing on his lips, and the echo of his piety mingled with the lofty harps of cherubim, “holy, holy, holy!” This influence was symbolized by the living wheels, seen by Ezekiel, when the hand of Jehovah was upon him, and the visions of God lifted him up, among the captives, upon the banks of the Chebar!

Or, coming down to later times, look at trembling anxious crowds, flocking together under heavenly impulse, in the

wilderness of Bethabara, and upon the banks of the Jordan, confessing sin, and receiving at the hands of Messiah's messenger, the holy rite of initiation! Look at lately careless, but now conscience-smitten thousands, upon whom the Spirit of God had descended, at the grand pentecostal feast of Jerusalem, crying in wild amazement and different languages—"What shall we *do* to be *saved*?" See him of Tarsus, a proud and freezing academic, fresh from the schools of philosophy, madly wending his way to Damascus, to do murder in the name of God! But on his way thither, a voice from heaven arrested him—"Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou me?" It was enough, the appeal ran through every nerve, and trembled in his heart of steel! He forgot the blandishments of literature and the parchments of the synagogue—he *dashed* his alma-mater and his credentials, and at the feet of the crucified Sufferer he had sworn to disgrace, *wept* in all the bitterness of remorse—"Lord, *what* wilt thou have me to *do*?" Witness the official interview between Paul and Agrippa. The apostle is introduced into court, under a burst of popular indignation, and loaded with public obloquy, but does he hesitate or cower—does he temporize or conciliate—does he compromise his conscience and his creed, as the price of his freedom? No, clad in steel, as he was, and loaded with chains, disdaining the trappings of a court and the diadem of the Cæsars, he gallantly planted the standard of the cross, in the presence of his judge and his accusers; and throwing down heaven and hell at their feet, extorted from the astonished tribunal, the involuntary confession, "*Almost* thou persuadest *me* to be a *Christian*!" And there are intervals, when such is the experience of every man. Unbelief, vague and general, may result from ignorance, interest, or inattention; but every man, even the most reprobate, has his moments of self-questioning, when conviction of the truth of the gospel,

thrills his startled conscience, like an electric shock of awakened memory, in the bosom of the damned !

Throw your eye for a moment, upon Felix and Drusilla—a man without honor and a woman without shame, seeking to amuse themselves with the new superstition—the vulgar ethics of the Nazarene ! Look at the haughty Roman, in courtly guise and with gallant air, fast by the side of Drusilla, even in the hall of judgment—gay and buoyant from the haunts of pleasure—with kindling brow and joyous pulse, kneeling at beauty's shrine—basking in its smile, and wreathed with love's freshest myrtle. But when the bold pleader, in the cause of the *Crucified*, reasoned before him, of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” his words *killed as they fell*—“Felix trembled,” and the only law of the proud voluptuary's heart, was that of wild and dread emotion !

This Divine influence—this promised dispensation of the Spirit, is distinctly declared by Christ himself, as the last and greatest evidence, both of his Messiahship, and the truth of Christianity ; and he very clearly intimates, that its determined rejection is “the sin unto death,” for which no atonement has been made, in any of all the compensative arrangements of the Divine government. It is that fearful irremissible blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by which the wretched delinquent—the guilty trifler, is left to himself in this world, and devoted to damnation in the next.

*Finally.* But for such influence, how will you account for the early and stupendous spread of the gospel ? The lines of its first propagation went out into all the world, like the travel of an earthquake, mocking time and distance by a chain of shocks, leaving ruin and devastation, in cities and countries, between which seas and oceans are heaving and rolling ! And not only was Divine influence the principle of vitality, in the early spread and diffusion of the gospel, but it has been the great impulsive law of its perpetuation—the grand principle



of balance and action, but for which, the whole heaven and earth of Christianity, would long since have been rolled together like a parchment scroll !

When the gospel was first published, the world was everywhere in arms to crush the Syrian superstition—the Galilean dream ; and sage and savage—magistrate and mob—priest and people, bent upon its extermination, *leagued* for the contest ! But it was in vain ; for no sooner had Christianity flung her banner upon the winds, than the altars of demons and idolatry began to crumble before her march ; and everywhere confronting herself, before her enemies, in the open field of the world's debate, she continued the conflict, until the hydra-headed dragon of Paganism, then in possession of the world, was expelled the hieroglyphic heaven of his wonted supremacy, and the persecuted faith occupied in triumph, the theatre of his once deadly and disastrous dominance !

The slightest attention to its history, will satisfy you, that the gospel must inevitably have perished from the world, at different times, had it not possessed within itself, the reproductive power of a deathless semination ! When first introduced among the hills of Judea—to appeal to fact, in the language of prophetic imagery—it was not a majestic tree, transplanted from the garden of God, loaded with verdure and bending with fruitage, nor did it grow and strengthen, amid sunshine and rain, and vernal breezes. Let prophecy give its history. It was planted in blood and tears—the highway—the common thoroughfare of nations, was its only retreat. It was *nursed* by the winds and *rocked* by the tempest—it was *gnawed* by the goat and *browsed* by the stag—the wild boar out of the wood *whetted his tusk* upon its bark—the *scars* of its *early* fortunes are still upon its *trunk*, and the *lightning's path* may be *traced* in its *branches* ! And yet, its top was soon in the heavens, and its shadow over the nations !

From all which, embracing the whole range of topics dis-

cussed, you will have inferred, that the cordial reception and advocacy of Christianity on the one hand, and its neglect and rejection on the other, *divide* and give moral classification to the millions of our race; and she will accordingly award them different and opposing destinies. To one or the other of these classes, we all belong; and as such, are appealed to. Christians! exalted is your faith, and high your trust; and it shall be seen, that your faith is true, and your trust wise! The futurities of your destiny, are indeed thrilling; but you look forward to them with painless awe, and rejoice even while you tremble! Brighter and benigner scenes of action and enjoyment; spread out before you—richer and higher beatitudes await your progress; and it only remains, that you connect reward with endurance, and thus add strength to resolution and lustre to hope! And with such a treasure, what can make you poor? No heart in the living world, may beat kindred with your own. Yours may be the sorrow of those, who have loved and trusted, but to lose and suffer! You may be mourners without sympathy over the graves of those, whose affection blessed your childhood, and cheered the gloom of after years! But in contrast with these, the gospel points to the mighty future, expanding before you, in all the perpetual elements of existence and fruition!

And *you, ye despisers*, “who wonder and perish”—after all, are you still ashamed of the gospel or doubtful of its truth, as the reason why you neglect or reject it; and is *such* shame, or doubt—*this* neglect or rejection, to mark the conduct of life, and be your only preparation for death! If so, we can only leave with you, the regrets of an honest solicitude for your welfare. You have deprived Heaven itself of the power of blessing you. Earth has no solace to offer, and when judgment, as soon it must, shall confirm your choice, even the damned will refuse their sympathy, and hiss your groaning! And will you, to urge the last appeal in the calendar of mo-

tives, *will* you, under the influence of a deadly moral torpor, however superinduced, or the more miserable hydrophobia of a wild and homeless skepticism, *risk every thing* connected with immortality! With the torch of God burning about your path, and his warnings in your ears—with death fast hold of you, and the gulf of unpitying, hell-avenging damnation gaping at your feet—*will you persist*, until the curse of final rejection, is seared and branded on your heart, by the fires of Omniscient retribution! *Answer* this question, to your hearts and Heaven, while we proceed to notice, *finally*,

*The power and efficacy of the gospel, in accomplishing the general, and more specific objects, of its bestowment.*

Christianity restores man to his primitive dignity and intended happiness. It links him in covenant fellowship with God and goodness—in high confederation with Heaven and virtue; and having sustained him, during the term of his earthly trial, numbers him with the hosts, and regales him with the songs and joys of heaven. Christianity has always been distinguished by peculiar characteristic power and action. From age to age, in the full maturity of might, and vigor of achievement, she has so wielded her chosen agencies and instrumentalities, us to triumph in every struggle. Only cast your eye, upon the first page of her history, and read there the great proto-promise of the world's redemption; and from this grand epoch of recovered grace, prophetically announced to the first man and woman, take a lengthened survey of her territorial spread, and chronological career, until she claims, by conquest, the vacated thrones of Paganism, and finally plants her victorious standard, in the post-millennial camp of the apocalyptic Gog and Magog—and you have irresistible confirmation of all we have said—although language is all too weak to tell or paint our meaning!

Christianity has never neglected or lost sight of even the feeblest of her friends, among all the multitude of her con-

trite ones, from the hour, in which angels caught up the spirit of the murdered Abel, down to the last trophy borne on their wings, to the thrones of heaven and the bosom of Cherubim ! The sceptre of her mercy originally extended to all—her announcements will this day reach a thousand lands to the same effect ; nor can you open your eyes, without seeing the banner of her protection, gradually throwing its shadow over the suppliant millions of a kneeling world ! And, what more can the lofty hopes, or undying aspirations of our nature, ask for ! What, compared with this, is the Eldorado of wealth, or the Utopia of empire ! It is true, the struggle, the militancy of her movements, is not ended. The war of adverse elements—of antagonist principles, is going on. Christianity still has to encounter, the shock and resistance of the turbid sea of infidelity, casting up “mire and dirt ;” but the whole machinery of adverse action, is alike under her eye, and inservient to her purposes ; and the agents themselves, unheeding, are but surges of the tide she controls—fated conductors of the invisible influence, under which, the *total host* of billows, in the whole line of successive impulse, swelling and rolling shoreward, shall each, in turn, *strike*, and *break*, and be no more ! *In conclusion—*

Christianity sprang up in the *East*, the *birth-place* of man—the primitive *platform* of the world’s ancestry—the aboriginal *cradle* of civilization and culture. It was on *this* theatre she *first* appeared for the *rescue* of the lost. It is *here*, she began to exert an influence, the *circle* of which has yet to be measured ! Above, and yet coincident with nature, the unalterable laws of the moral world have been the fulcrum of her power, and putting the mighty, but benign impulses of a vast moral economy in play, she moved on to the accomplishment of her immediate and ulterior purposes !

The apostles and first ministers of Jesus Christ, announced the burden of their mission, not only to the poor and the

lowly, but in the ears of the world's imperial and intellectual masters; and before these thought it worth while to pause and examine the new religion, Christianity had subverted the genius of the age—had colored the philosophy of the schools, and remoulded the destinies of civilization! And all this, and more, was achieved without any external pomp or display of preparation. Principle and patience were her armor—ploughshares her swords, and pruning-hooks her spears. Humility constituted her robe of state, and the poor of the earth enriched her treasury!

And with such means and weapons only, kings and dominions were incorporated into her household—the cabinet of empire became her closet, and the hall of legislation, the theatre of her inculcation! For nearly nineteen centuries, the *deluge* of time and change, has been *sweeping* on, *loaded* with the *wrecks* of empire, and the *memorials* of earthly vicissitude! Thrones and kingdoms; schools, and camps, and dynasties, have successively disappeared, from the notice of the world; but each in turn, has been laid under contribution to her mighty designs, not only increasing the *magnificence* of her triumph, by augmenting her forces and facilities, but adding *lustre* to her *diadem*, by the ruins of *grandeur* and the *spoils of ages*, with which they have surrounded her!

Such then is the gospel, the only remedy to which our ruined nature can appeal; and such some of the reasons briefly, why we *believe* and *publish* it. And God Almighty grant, *you may one and all hasten in time, to anchor your hopes*, where Heaven in mercy *has placed your Help!*

## SERMON III.

ANGELIC AGENCY, A DISTINGUISHING ELEMENT IN THE  
MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.”—PSALM lxxviii. 17.

“Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.”—DAN. vii. 10.

THE subject we propose is one seldom discussed in the pulpit, and but little understood, it is to be feared, *out* of it. Let us approach it with all possible directness and simplicity, both of conception and statement. With regard to the angelic intelligences, to whose history and character we invite attention, it will be proper,

*First, to ascertain their NATURE, DIGNITY, and ENDOWMENTS.*

This being done, inquiry may be directed,

*Secondly, to the NATURE, EXTENT, and PURPOSES of their AGENCY in the moral government of God.*

*Thirdly, we shall be prepared for suitable REFLECTIONS and INFERENCES.*

As angels stand forth in *distinctive* rank and power, as the most exalted of all created natures, the *purposes* of their existence cannot be supposed to terminate in themselves. Sustaining to God the relations of dependence and obligation; and to man, those of common brotherhood. As it regards the moral purposes of being, they must be looked upon as

belonging to the great moral system of cause and effect, under the high control of Him to whom we all alike belong. Thus viewed, they become invested with the additional relations of *agents* and *instruments*, in connection with other and less exact divisions of the intelligent universe.

That eminent student of the Bible, Dr. Owen, who has been styled, "the Lebanon of the English theological world," has said, "If we follow the Scriptures, we are as safe in treating of *angels*, as when we treat of *worms*."

#### I. *We notice their NATURE, DIGNITY, and ENDOWMENTS.*

Originally indebted to revelation alone, for a knowledge of the existence and character of angels, as an order of beings essentially separate from all others, we must, of course, confine ourselves to the disclosures of revelation, in any attempt we may make to ascertain their true distinctive nature and relations. These disclosures are full and frequent, direct and unambiguous, throughout the whole range of revealed truth. Angelic natures are brought to view, at every brief interval, from the earlier pages of Genesis to the closing scenes of the Apocalypse. Not less than sixteen of the inspired penmen of the Bible, unite in giving us a clear and consistent account of the *existence, dignity, and employment* of angels. An account so strikingly harmonious and self-corroborative, that such a *complication*, and yet *unity* of evidence, must strike every one, as at once inexplicable, except upon the ground of a common inspiration, and the undoubted truth of what they assume.

As angels are an order of beings above us, and beyond the ordinary range of our sympathies—coming in intermediately between the Creator and his human creation—forming a link of mysterious connection—a kind of graduating *nexus*, between the grandeur of Godhead and the imperfection of humanity, human language and earthly analogies must, of necessity, be employed with great disadvantage, in any attempt

to describe their nature, or depict their functions. Man occupies a place at the head of God's visible creation, and serves to connect the intellectual offspring of the Creator, as separately found in heaven and earth—two widely different orders of being, and yet constituting, in this regard, the *one great family* of the God and Father of all. The fitness of this remark will turn, in part, upon the compound nature of man, as consisting of matter and spirit—soul and body—a physical, not less than intellectual being.

It will thus be perceived, upon the ground of this distinction, how humanity, in its physical elements and aspects, becomes allied to higher, and purely spiritual natures, by the spiritual part of his own complex, yet individual being. In another aspect, man becomes a link of gradation in the more extended scale of the Creator's workmanship, connecting the whole economy of sentient existence below him, with all superior natures above him. His physical part allying him to inferior orders of being, while his intellectual nature claims affinity with those spiritual beings, in no way connected with matter, and by consequence, unencumbered with body. That such an order of spiritual intelligences exists—possessing essential individuality of being, notwithstanding the exclusive incorporeity of nature ascribed to them, has been the common opinion of ages and nations. Even where the direct teachings of Christianity have never reached, reason, moral intuition, and the remains of primitive revelation, have given this opinion to mankind.

The existence and agency of such an order of beings, are fairly inferable from the known order of the Divine creations, and the whole analogy of the works of God, as known to man. In observing the Divine workmanship, we begin with dull, inert, unorganized matter beneath and about us, and ascend by a gradation, at once marked and regular, to the living plant, the sentient animal, and intellectual man. And here, between



man and God, there wants another link, or connective order of beings; and this link—such order is furnished us in the existence and history of the intermediate class of celestials, of which we are now treating. Strikingly, and even beautifully analogous to this, are the conceptions and impersonations of classic mythology, peopling every earthly scene with attendant genii, giving Dryad and Satyr, Naiad and Pan, to wood, fountain, stream and grove, leaving no place without its presiding divinity, and no human being without the watchful care of a tutelary demon. We speak of the intellectual conception only, as nearly allied to the great truth in question, and the moral instincts of the heart with regard to it, without reference to the abuse of this picturesque, pantheistic dream, or the grossness or defilement into which it degenerated. The mythological dream too, with regard to evil agents, such as Harpy, Hydra, Gorgon, Sphinx, Centaur, and Chimera, is of the same character, and goes to confirm the correctness of our general position.

The various distinctive names and titles used in the Scriptures, as descriptive of the angelic hosts, are probably used as a general representation of all the different orders of angels, with regard to office and employment, rather than for the purpose of giving each order a specific designation, as distinguished from the rest in dignity and privilege. And when we read of “angels,”—“cherubim,”—“seraphim,”—the “holy ones,”—the “living creatures,”—“watchers,”—“princes,”—“captain of the Lord’s hosts,”—“the hosts of God,”—“heavenly hosts,”—“archangels,”—“chariots of God,”—“morning stars,”—“spirits,”—“ministers,”—“thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,” our attention is called, not so much to a gradation of rank, as to a *classification*, or perhaps but general *comprehension* of office and employment. Accordingly, are the hosts of God under notice called *angels*, it is to denote that they are not only *ministers* attending in

the Divine presence, but *messengers* sent from God to man, on missions both of judgment and mercy. As *cherubim*, they excel in knowledge. As *seraphim*, in depth and ardor of devotion. As the *holy ones*, they are preëminent in purity. As the *living creatures*, they have undecaying, immortal energy of life. In the character of *watchers*, we see the fidelity of never-failing guardianship. As *princes*, they rule and command. As the *hosts of God*, with captains and leaders, they are marshalled, in every field of contest, on the side of God and virtue. Is Michael called *archangel*, it is to show he is over others; and that those over whom he is placed, are subordinate to a supremacy with which he is invested. As *chariots of God*, they are instruments of power and achievement. As *sons of God*, nearness and dignity of relationship and office are denoted. As *morning stars*, they are eminently lights and guides. As *spirits*, they are unaffected by the laws and disabilities of matter. As *ministers* and *messengers*, they dispense the blessings, and variously subserve the purposes of providence and grace. The well-known metonym, or rhetorical form of speech, by which *thrones* denote those who sit upon them, and *dominions, principalities, and powers*, those by whom they are wielded and exercised, is but additional confirmation of what we assume.

Here then, are immortal natures, whose very names announce them as every way suited to be God's messengers and representatives to man—natures essentially spiritual, free from grossness and infirmity, and in no sense subject to injury or pollution—natures bright with intelligence, glowing with fervor, and burning with zeal—shedding light upon the path, and giving direction to the hopes and aims of humanity—set for our defence, and to whom we are given in charge. Extending to us watchful regard, and unremitting vigilance of care. Resisting evil, by an array of heavenly forces—marshalling their trains in support of truth and virtue, and with

all their elevation and dignity of nature, not less than corresponding power, strength, and activity, subserving the high purposes of the ministrations with which they are charged, whether in our behalf, or relating to other interests of the Divine government.

As no question can arise, in relation to the existence and history of angels, except in connection with the truth, and actual teachings of revelation, it is not deemed important to say much on the subject of their creation; and we shall do little more, therefore, than assume what the Scriptures everywhere assert,—that they are a part of the Creator's workmanship; and should most probably rank among the *earlier*, if not the *earliest* of the Divine creations. The creation of angels is as directly ascribed to God, as that of man; and it is done in such variety, and with such explicitness of language, as to preclude, at once, all ground for doubt or cavil.

We cannot suppose that the creation of angels thus affirmed, was any part of what the schoolmen call the *hexahemeron*, or six days' work of God, in the creation of the world; for we are told, these "morning stars and sons of God, sang together and shouted for joy," when the foundations of the earth were laid, and our planet first emerged into being, as the grand evolution of creation's week of wonders. And if so, they must have preëxisted; and for aught we know, may have done so, for half eternity! The angelic, was an anterior creation. It had long preceded ours. Angels are the elder children of eternity. They are the first-born of God's creation. That the creation of angels was long antecedent to the creation of man, and the genesis of heaven and earth, as taught in the Bible, seems clearly inferable also, from the history of that portion of the angelic creation, who "kept not their first estate," but fell by sin. The prince, or chief of these, as the well-known and confirmed enemy of God and goodness, achieved the temptation and fall of man, at a very early

period; probably but a few months after his creation; as he fell, and was expelled the Eden in which he had been placed, before the birth of his first-born; which we have every reason to suppose, was not long after the creation. It would be a most violent supposition, unwarranted by any thing like analogy, to suppose he had been created, and had fallen, and addressed himself to his great mission of evil, within the brief term in question.

The more or less prevalent, if not popular opinion, that the angels are comparatively few in number—a limited train or band of attendants, awaiting the orders, and executing the purposes of infinite Majesty, not unlike the chosen body-guard, or courtly train of some earthly prince, must be rejected, as utterly at variance with the whole evidence of revelation on the subject. In the text, we have “thousands”—and “thousand thousands” indefinitely, with ten thousand times ten thousand to be added to the previous illimitation of number. Our Lord speaks of a detachment of “more than twelve legions of angels,” subject to his wishes at any moment. He probably spoke of this number—between seventy and eighty thousand, as a limited number *especially detailed* in connection with the great errand upon which *he* had visited earth.

Where our rendering of the Apocalypse reads “thousands of thousands,” the Greek is “~~ten~~ myriads of myriads,”—a definite myriad being *ten thousand*, we have the aggregate of a *thousand* multiplied *ten thousand times*! St. John speaks of evil angels, to the number of *two hundred thousand thousand*. Now if, as the language seems to imply, we *multiply*, instead of merely *doubling* the number, we have a *thousand times* two hundred thousand—that is, *two hundred millions*! The fair presumption is, that but a part of the evil angels, are here enumerated; as but a part of our *world* and its *population* are under notice; say a *third* part. This would swell the

account to at least six hundred millions—nearly equal to the entire population of our globe, at any one time. And as but a *third* part of the angels originally *fell*, and became apostate, the number of the unfallen is indicated as certainly not less than *twelve hundred millions*!

The frequent reduplication of *thousands*, in the instances quoted, seems indeed to convey the idea of numberless myriads. And in this view of the subject, we are fully sustained by the inspired testimony of both St. Paul and St. John. The former points the Church to an “innumerable company of angels;” and the latter declares them to be so multitudinous, that “no man can number them.” The count is beyond the power of numbers. While it may be the judgment, therefore, of the faith and piety of earth, that the numerical sum of the angelic hosts cannot be correctly ascertained, we are compelled, even by the indefinite Scripture-numbering, to assume that it amounts to incalculable millions!—so “innumerable,” that “no man can number them!” It will hereafter be seen, how this view of the subject connects with the *dignity* of angelic intelligences—not individually, it is true, but as a *distinct order* of being in the intellectual universe.

Should the fact, thus incidentally brought to view, that the number of evil angels is such as to allow, in the individual instance of each human being, a separate devil to array himself against, and contest the question of human hopes and happiness—should this fact strike you as cause of discouragement and alarm, we need only say, that *in* the camps, and *among* the hosts of God, we have at least *two* celestial guardians, standing up for our help, and covering us with their shields, to every *one* of all the infernal assailants hell can, under any circumstances, array against us!

Angels are *inhabitants of heaven*, as their home and abode. Here, they belong, aboriginally, and are only found on earth, as *ministers* and *messengers*. This distinction is material.

Heaven—the heaven of heavens—the *supreme* heaven—the parent city of God's universal dominion—the immediate, *immortal* abode of Deity, is their proper place of residence. It is their native home—their only proper sphere; and they are, originally, its proper inhabitants; as truly so, as men are the proper inhabitants of earth. They constitute its hosts, and people its expansions. They form its retinue, and swell the *state* of its court. There they belong, and there they minister. They are a celestial race—a distinct, ethereal species, with heaven as their habitat, and are found on earth only as visitants and messengers, sent forth on special missions. They minister, both in heaven and upon earth. They were ministering spirits before the first of their number had visited earth. These ministrations, however, are very different, both in kind and ritual. The Greek word *leitourgikos* expresses the heavenly, as a fixed and settled service, connected with the throne and equipage of the “King eternal, immortal, invisible;” while the term *diakonia* denotes the oversight and service, called for by the want and trial of humanity, in a state of earthly training for the rewards of heavenly bliss.

These angel servants and ministers stand related to God, as the first and noblest of his creatures, holding the chief places of power and distinction in the Divine kingdom. In every department of his administration, they are the ministers of his will and pleasure, and the messengers of his love. They stand related to man, at the same time, as a superior order of intelligences, in sympathy with his wants and interests, kindly disposed toward him from the impulses of a never-failing benevolence, and unceasingly engaged in promoting his happiness. Alike the servants of God and the benefactors of man, they claim our devout and endearing regard. They occupy a high and commanding position in the scheme of creation. A high superiority of nature is justly awarded them. We feel—all admit the imparity and disproportion be-

tween men and angels. And this applies not less to intellectual, than other distinctive differentia. They are as far removed above us by superior intelligence, as by greater power.

Our Lord graduates the scale of intelligence, by placing that of angels next to God. He tells us, if any but God could know the day of judgment, it would be known to angels. To be "wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God," is inspired evidence to the same effect. The widow of Tekoah speaks of angels, as "knowing all things." The tempter said to Eve, "ye shall be as angels, knowing all things, whether good or evil." The title *cherubim*, literally means *fulness of knowledge*. They are represented in symbol, as "full of eyes, within and without," denoting an order of intelligence, only less than Divine. "Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel"—"Though we speak with the tongues of angels," are forms of expression fully sustaining our position. One of these angels said to the prophet, "I am come to give thee skill and understanding." When one of them questioned John, the fit reply was, "Sir, thou knowest." Christ says, "I have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things." What dignity and elevation, what grandeur and reach of thought, belong to angel-minds, compared with aught we can claim, as the children of earth! Other aspects of our subject, however, will give this topic further illustration.

*Angels are said to "excel in strength," and are represented as having great power and might.*

They have always been distinguished by extraordinary *physical* power, in relation to the objects and operations of nature and providence, with which their agency has been variously, and more or less immediately connected. By a prophet, and also an apostle, they are said to be "mighty." John speaks of a "strong angel;" and of another, as "having great power;" and of still another, as "strong and mighty." An

angel, in a single night, slew all the first-born of Egypt, from the family record of imperial Pharaoh, down to the meanest of his subjects; and so sudden and terrible was the stroke, that the cry of death rose, simultaneously, from all the cities and borders of the Nile! Another, in the army of Sennacherib invading Israel, smote "a hundred and eighty-five thousand," in a single night, leaving them dead in the camp of the invader! Another, in the days of David, smote "seventy thousand" Israelites in the course of three days. Michael was guardian *prince* of the whole kingdom of Israel. Another, probably one of the fallen angels, was *prince* of the Persian empire, and withstood Gabriel, for "one and twenty days," in a contest relating to the conflicting interests of the two kingdoms; and Gabriel, after a visit to his own national charge, gives notice to Daniel, that he should be compelled to renew the contest—"Now will I return to fight with the *prince* of Persia." In like manner, the kingdom of Greece had its guardian prince. An angel smote the kingly Herod, amid the pageantries of his court and palace, "and he was eaten up of worms," under the gaze of those who had just declared him to be a god! Seven angels are appointed to inflict the seven last plagues—the concluding curses of the earth. It was given to four angels, in the infliction of a fearful judgment, "to hurt the earth and the sea." One is represented as drying up the river Euphrates. The angel of destruction, commissioned to destroy mystic Babylon, types that destruction by taking up a mighty millstone—of huge and calpean dimensions, it may be, and dashing it violently into the sea! By another, the great millennial angel, the Devil is represented as seized, bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, for the term of a thousand years! Angels hold the four winds of heaven. The descent of one produced an earthquake, as, in the presence of the cohort, he rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre! An angel went



before the children of Israel, in their exodus from Egypt, and drove out the Canaanite—the entire mass of an ancient, multitudinous population before them! An angel opened a fountain of waters in a desert, to save the life of a famished mother and her dying child! When a prophet would denote the strength of the kingdom of Judah, he says, “the house of David shall be as the angel of Jehovah.” While earth trembled beneath one foot of the angel of judgment, the sea was made the echo of the voice of another, throwing its reverberations upon the bosom of immensity. What need we say of the dignity of an order of beings thus endowed! With what lofty suitableness and godlike energy, must they adjust themselves to the purposes of their mission! The first and noblest of God’s intellectual offspring—springing into being at the foot of his throne, and beneath his kindling eye,—the earliest and elder specimens of his creating skill—the privileged attendants of his immediate pavilion—clad in the splendor of their own immortal nature, they exhibit the supreme height of created excellence, and *high over all its ranks*, emit on all their richer moral radiance!

And as all other created beings are beneath them in dignity, so are they subordinate to them in station. In this array of state,—the Divine pomp of the attendance and ministrations assigned them, as they surround the throne of God, or go forth from him, to command, avenge, or deliver, how distinctively, and with what attraction, must they rise upon our view! Beings of heavenly birth and appointment, illustrious alike in nature and station, all they *say* or *do* or *feel*, becomes their high original! On every field of nature, and in all the relations of providence, they are at home, and prepared for action! What strength, elevation, and grandeur of endowment! What force of understanding, comprehension of view, and fulness of resource! When man sees such beings coming to

*bless and save*, what must not be the rich expression of eye, and ear, and mind! How natural that John should "fall down and worship," and Daniel tell us, "As for me, there remained no strength in me!"

*The union of energy and action—rapidity of movement—facility and speed of transit from place to place, in the instance of angels, rank high among their unearthly endowments.*

Their surpassing activity and energy, combined with celerity of motion, are denoted by the prophet, when he says, "He maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire"—"He rode upon a cherub and did fly." Ezekiel says, "The living creatures ran and returned, as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Of one of these angels, it is recorded, that he fired the sacrifice of the worshipper, and rode off to heaven in the flame of the altar! We make no attempt to explain the law of a spirit's motion. Our *physics* utterly fail us here. The *dynamics* of mind, as known to us, furnish no explanation. Our information is from heaven, by means of revelation, and we must leave your faith to encounter the mystery. How these self-buoyant natures lift themselves from earth to heaven, and descend from heaven to earth, with the speed of thought—with a rapidity greater than that of a sunbeam, is something *all beyond our ken*. "An angel did fly"—"I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven"—"The noise of their wings was as the noise of great waters—as the noise of a host." These and similar forms of expression, are left to explain themselves! A single instance will exemplify our position. The prophet Daniel, about the usual time of the evening oblation, presents himself before God in prayer. The angel Gabriel visits him before he closed his devotions, and expressly assures him, that it was not until *after* he had commenced his devotions, that he received an order from God to visit him! How mysterious is this! The light of the

fixed stars is several years in reaching us. The supreme heaven can scarcely be presumed to be less remote, and yet Gabriel came the entire distance, during the evening hour of the prophet's devotions! And with such lightning speed of motion, correspond their other endowments. The *spirituality* and grandeur of their nature, place them beyond the pale of this world's analogies or accidents. And there was less of poetry, perhaps, than Milton imagined—a falling short even of the truth of nature, when he represents one of them, with a field of vision extending “from eastern point of Libra, to the fleecy star that bears Andromeda, far off Atlantic seas, beyond the horizon!” Everywhere seen, wrapt in the gloom of tempest, or rolling and burning in the cars of light—chain- ing the winds, or drying up rivers—taking shape in the sun, or *zoned* in the rainbow—we turn to them, *awe-struck*, and yet *confiding*, in view alike of the *vast capabilities* of their nature, and the *beneficent* visitations with which they enrich our faith and hope!

After these views, derived solely from the Scriptures, what more need we say, with regard to the nature, dignity, and endowment of the angelic natures we contemplate? What elevation of nature, and eminence of station! What grandeur of intelligence, and undimmed splendor of character! How sublime their allegiance and devotion—their truth and fidelity, to God and man! Whether rapt in awe, or absorbed in song—bowing in reverence, or lost in ecstasy—in sympathy with the joy of heaven, or the sorrow of earth, *infinite good*, and *immortal loveliness*, attract and engross them! Activity and service but increase the ardor and intensity of devotion and enjoyment. And if any thing more were necessary, human want and trial,—the weakness and unworthiness of earthly aspirants after heavenly recompense—the stain of defection, and the dust of encounter, connected with the lofty principles, and transcendent aims of Christian virtue, cannot fail

further to indicate the nature of their mission, and what *must* be the *character* of the agents, by whose ministrations it is to be accomplished !

II. WE NOTICE, MORE DIRECTLY, THE NATURE, EXTENT, AND PURPOSES OF ANGELIC AGENCY, IN THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Man can have no direct, sensible intercourse with the Creator, without a departure, as in the case of miracles, from the ordinary, established law of relationship between them. All idea of immediate, personal contact, is excluded. For such contact, we are not prepared ; and it is not to be thought of. It is upon other conditions, sinful humanity is admitted to fellowship with God. Intermediate agencies are necessary to the result. The Divine kingdom upon earth, is an administration of means. Indirect agency is an established law of procedure. God works by the means and the ministry of intermediate causes. And among these, as regards man, angelic agency is by no means unimportant. So far, indeed, from being among the least, it ranks high among the leading, capital truths of the Christian system. With that system, it blends intimately, and is essentially interwoven, in all its aspects and relations. The subject is introduced in more than two hundred different connections, in the New Testament alone, to say nothing of the ever-recurring revelations of the Old.

Angelic agents have in charge, as it regards man, the interests of earth and time. We find their interpositions connected with the general administration of nature—with the range and evolutions of providence—the polity and progress of empire—the history and hopes of the Church—the welfare of the family, and individual destiny. These interpositions have affected the laws and operations of nature—have directly or indirectly subserved and carried out, so as to achieve the

ends and objects of providential oversight. Have given direction and issue to the schemes of national aggrandizement. Have guarded, defended, and enlarged the Church, with a watchfulness and jealousy, all their own—have preserved, and secured the perpetuation of the family, for future good and usefulness; while the individual has been guided, cheered, and blessed, amid the thousand ills of life! In all the vast, the varied, and luminous developments of the Divine rule, the doctrine of angelic agency increases in magnitude and splendor, from the *gray dawn* of early prophecy, until it bursts full upon our vision, amid the wonders and effulgence of Patmos! It establishes a secondary, yet important *bond* of relation, and medium of intercourse between God and man. It is an arrangement, always subordinate to the great mediation of the Son of God, and the dispensation of the Spirit; intended to give application and efficiency to these higher, primary laws of influence in the salvation of man. Its comprehensiveness, and application of power—its extent and energy, show its results to be beyond the competence of man.

This agency is variously exemplified, not merely in the supernatural disturbance of the course and laws of nature—numerous instances of miraculous punishment and protection, but in the sublime efficiency of moral impression and impulse. Who can fail to be struck with the vastness and variety of the field and scale, upon which angelic agency has been embarked, for the accomplishment of the Divine purposes respecting man alone! What meant that column of flame, and the hovering cherubim, guarding the way of the tree of life, at the eastern gate of Eden! What had nature's laws to do with that unapproachable flame—the fiery barrier and angel-guards, protecting the passage of immortality, against the approach of man! What law or lesson of nature could have told man, as did that flaming column, and those angel-attendants, that what he saw, bespoke the will and work of Heaven!

Adam lived long ; and perhaps wandered far. Sorrow, want, and labor were his lot ; but did he ever lose the impression made by the presence and splendor of the cherubim, as they guarded the scene of his early happiness, and untimely fall ?

One of the inspired penmen informs us, that about a thousand years before Christ, "God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem ;" and that instantly, poising himself between heaven and earth, sword in hand, he inflicted a destruction, so instant and terrible, that although, while yet engaged in the act, God interposing, said, "It is enough, stay now thy hand"—that hand, however, had already slaughtered of the people, full three-score and ten thousand ! When a prophet would denote the most fearful and summary overthrow of God's enemies—a ruin utter and immediate, in which nature has no part, he says, "Let the angel of Jehovah *chase* them." When the two angels were sent of God to rescue Lot and family from the impending overthrow of Sodom, and the house of Lot was surrounded by the evil-minded Sodomites, in reckless violation of all the rights of home and hospitality, the angel-guests within the dwelling, unaided by any known law of physical force or influence, inflicted the curse of instant blindness upon the assailants without, and left them to grope their way in utter darkness ! Upon a mountain of Israel, overbrowsing the city of Dothan, where the prophet Elisha had taken refuge from the pursuit of his enemies, the angels of God assembled in such number and force as to invest the whole mountain with "horses and chariots of fire ;" and while Elisha remained *unharméd*, the invading Assyrians, smitten with blindness, were, by a ruse of war, conducted into their own country, before they could see where they were ! When Daniel was thrown as prey to the lions, an angel of God was with him, and the denned and famished monsters forgot their nature, and grew tame before him ! When the doomed children of the captivity, the heroic confessors of Dura, were by imperial decree,

“thrown *bound* into the burning fiery furnace,” whose heat, sevenfold beyond all former event, was expected instantly to *char* and *consume* them, an angel of God walked *with* them “in the midst of the furnace,” and the only effect of the fire, after killing the men who threw them in, was to dissolve the fetters with which they were bound, and thus leave them free to walk and commune with the angel *in* the furnace, or walk *out*, as, without fear or durance, they might prefer! As the great prophetic teachers and reformers, Elijah and Elisha, journeyed and communed in the valley of the Jordan near Jericho, Elijah revealing to Elisha his approaching departure, and about to leave with him his blessing and his mantle, suddenly the angels of God appear for him, and with “chariot and horses of fire,” in the path of the whirlwind they ascend together, and are received into heaven! The angel of health at the pool of Bethesda, by simply agitating, imparted to the troubled waters a virtue unknown, under any other circumstances. An angel of God, charged with the exodus of Israel, threw up an embankment of cloud between them and the Egyptians, so that a caravan of three millions of Israelites could not be seen by their pursuers! These instances are certainly sufficient to show, how the *course* and *laws* of nature have been supernaturally disturbed and suspended, in the operations and achievements of angelic agency

*Angelic interposition has been equally manifest and miraculous, in the instance of punishment and protection.*

“There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon—the Devil and *his* angels fought; and the dragon and his angels prevailed not;” that is, were vanquished. This movement of the celestial squadrons, headed by Michael, was in punishment of the Devil and his angels,—becoming such by open revolt, and now outlawed rebels in the kingdom and government of God. We have already seen, nor can we forget the burning barrier at the entrance of Para-

dise, thrown up by angels in punishment of man's primal offence. Who would be willing to have the vision of David, when he "saw the angel of Jehovah standing between heaven and earth, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem," to punish and destroy? Look at the angel who threw himself, sword in hand, and terrible in aspect, upon the path of the mercenary Baalim, on his way, under the inspiration of a bribe, to "curse Israel;" and gave even the dumb ass, on which the prophet sat, tongue and virtue to rebuke the madness, and punish the folly of the rider! It was an angel of Jehovah who issued the sentence of retribution, "Curse ye Meroz—curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof," in punishment of their not coming up to the help of God against the mighty. Prophecy says of the incurably wicked, "Let the angel of Jehovah persecute them." The angels of judgment are to gather out of the Divine kingdom "all that offend, and cast them into the furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth!" At the last day, we have the revelation of angels, not only attending the Judge in flaming fire, but "taking vengeance on them that know not God!" Amid the majestic splendors of the heaven disclosed to the eye of John, seven angels stand before God, with trumpets *each*, the sounding of which was to let loose upon the earth, the last fearful succession of woes by which its final destruction is to be preceded. Angels are the reapers of the last great harvest of the world. John saw one thrusting his sickle into the earth, gathering the *vine* of the earth—typing her ungodly children, and casting it into the great winepress of the wrath of God! He tells us of another band of angels, seven in number, who, in the execution of their high, retributive commission, proceeded to inflict upon the world, the seven last plagues with which it was to be visited. The angel of the waters is represented, when the third vial was emptied upon the rivers and fountains, as shouting to the throne of



judgment, "Thou art righteous, because thou hast thus judged." And the angel of the altar responds, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments!"

Three several detachments of seven angels each, are charged with the infliction of the *threefold succession* of curses, intended to destroy the enemies of God upon earth—the seven *woes*, the seven *plagues*, and the seven vials. One of the latter class conducted John, in vision, into the wilderness, and presented to him, in symbol, the destruction of apostate, Christian Babylon, the Harlot Mother of abominations; and immediately after, another angel came down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory, and he cried with a strong voice, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and become the habitation of devils." This is followed by the summons of another angel, to the people of God on earth—"Reward her, even as she rewarded you; the cup which she filled to you, fill to her double." The apostate Church being dissolved and destroyed, another angel, enthroned in the sun, gives notice of the destruction of the *other* enemies of God upon earth, under the symbol of a universal slaughter, providing feast and carnival for all the fowls of heaven!

The last act of this *grand militant drama*, is, the descent of an angel from heaven, in all the pomp and power of avenging retribution, with key and chain in hand, laying hold of the prince of infernals, binding and casting him in the pit of hell, only to be let loose again among the nations, for a brief term, immediately before the concluding dispensation of wrath in the destruction of our planet, and the awards of final judgment.

*Turning now to the counter-aspect of the proposition before us, we shall find angelic agency, equally, and even more conspicuous, in the upholdment and protection of virtue.*

The inspired announcements and recorded examples of the

Bible, are to the same effect, on this topic. In the first class we read, "Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?"—"He shall give his angels charge of thee."—"The angel of Jehovah encampeth around about them that fear him."—"Jehovah, before whom ye walk, shall send his angel before you to prepare your way."—"Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee *in the way*."—"Jehovah," said the patriarch, "will send his angel before thee, to prosper thy way."

Of the second class we learn, that "the angel of God went before the camp of Israel." An angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, "I know that thou fearest God." Angels ascending and descending, from earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, constituted the scene of the vision,—“the house of God, and gate of heaven.” An angel having appeared to Gideon, to incite and encourage, said to him, "Go in *this* thy might, and save Israel." An angel appeared to Israel in Bochim, and said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt." When the son of Joash offered sacrifice, an angel signified its acceptance, by causing "fire to rise up *out of the rock*," which served as the altar, and by which it was consumed. An angel appeared to the mother of Sampson, announcing his subsequent birth, as one of the future deliverers of Israel. When by angelic interposition, Elisha was about to be delivered out of the hand of the king of Assyria, by "horses and chariots of fire" already surrounding him, he said to his servant, "They that be with us, are more than they that be with them." When Elijah, after the defeat and disgrace of idolatry,—the slaying of five hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal—after all his transcendent labor of faith and zeal upon the sides of Carmel, found himself pursued by the power of Ahab, and the hate of Jezebel, in a state of utter want and destitution—when in this condition, he laid himself down to die an outcast under a juniper tree—in this

extremity, an angel of God awaked him from his sleep of despair and exhaustion, and said, "Arise and eat;" and in the strength of what the angel furnished, he went "forty days and forty nights," until he reached the mount of God in Horeb. When the vision of seraphim burst upon the gaze of Isaiah, and he feared himself "undone," an angel touched the lips of the dismayed prophet, and said to him, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Ezekiel describes an angel specially commissioned by God to go through Jerusalem, and "set a mark" of distinction and favor, "upon the foreheads of the men who sighed and cried for the abominations of the people." Gabriel said to Daniel, "Unto thee am I sent."—"Peace be unto thee,—fear not—be strong." In the vision of the horsemen seen by Zechariah in the valley of myrtles, an angel accosts the prophet, and proposes to inform him who his associates were.—"These," he says, "are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro in the earth." The angel then inquires of God, with regard to the return of the Jews from captivity, as the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy were nearly accomplished, and he assured the prophet, that Jehovah had answered him, "with *good words and comfortable words.*" This angel was also instructed by another angel, further to assure the prophet, that Jerusalem should soon be inhabited as towns without walls.—"For I," saith Jehovah, "will be unto her a wall of fire around about, and the glory in the midst." "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to show thee these glad tidings," was the lofty, yet benign language of the celestial messenger sent to the father of John the Baptist. The poverty of Lazarus, who was denied all earthly sympathy, save that of dogs, was triumphantly avenged by his being "borne by angels to Abraham's bosom." When our Lord ascended from Olivet, two of his celestial attendants detached themselves from the magnificent train

swelling the pomp of his triumph, and lingering behind, said to his disciples, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so *come* in like manner as ye have seen him *go* into heaven;" and then they poised their pinions, for increased rapidity of flight! Faith itself would hardly be a virtue, did it require stronger proof than this!

*It remains for us to show more directly and minutely, that angelic agency gives birth to moral IMPULSE and IMPRESSION, beyond what may strike you as fairly inferable from the preceding part of the argument.*

The influence we assume, extends to *thought, feeling, motive, purpose, action, and character*. Moral intuition, the conviction of the understanding, the heart's teachings, the voice of conscience, and all the interior springs of action, are subjected to the influence of which we speak. A prophet assures us, speaking of angels, "They shall bear thee up." The promise plainly has obvious reference to moral, rather than any other kind of support. "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy"—an announcement increasing alike both the *faith* and the *fervor* of piety. What must not have been the rapturous impulse of feeling, when the women at the sepulchre heard the angel say, "Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified!" In the fearful conflict of the garden, even our Lord himself was *strengthened* by an angel! An angel of God was sent to give comfort and direction to Cornelius. Gabriel said to Daniel, "O man greatly beloved, fear not. I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." "When the angel of the Lord spake these words to all the children of Israel," says the inspired record, "they lifted up their voice and wept." Moral impression only, seems to have been the effect of the expostulation.

An angel from the banks of the Ulai cried in the hearing of the prophet, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." And after a vision which had turned upon the same

prophet all the sorrows of the captivity, and left him in a state of anxious depression, he informs us, he was *strengthened* by an angel. Can we suppose that the hosts of God—the *Mahanaim* who met Jacob in the way, failed to give him the strongest moral impression? When at the close of the great trial of our Lord's steadfastness, which had lasted forty days, he was left weary, and bowed down, and exhausted, upon the battlement of the temple, and angels came and ministered unto him, was it not a ministration of *moral*, rather than *physical* strength—eminently relating to the mind and the affections of the Divine Sufferer? In evident allusion to the symbol of Jacob's ladder, thronged with the hosts of God, our Lord says, that from the time of his speaking, his disciples should see "heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," that is, upon the great basis of his mediation, typed by the ladder of Jacob's vision. That the influence of such ministrations must connect essentially with moral impulse, is too obvious to require proof, except in view of practical improvement. The same principle is involved, in the charge to Timothy,—“before the elect angels,” and in the apostles being “set forth a spectacle to angels.” Why is Timothy adjured, in the presence of angels, and the ministry of the apostles given as a theatre of angelic influence, (as the Greek implies,) unless in view of the moral power we assume? What must not have been the *strong* moral impression, as well upon the prisoners as upon the multitude, when an angel of God opened the prison doors, and sent the apostles to the temple to declare “all the words of the life,” it was their great business to teach? How sublime the moral elevation of feeling, when Peter exclaimed, “Now I know of a surety, that God hath sent his angel, and delivered me.”

When God sent an angel for the rescue of Paul and his associates, amid the horrors of prolonged shipwreck upon the

bosom of the storm-tossed Ægean, who said to Paul, "Fear not," what inspiration, and grandeur of moral heroism have we, in Paul's appeal to the despairing crew,—“Be of good cheer.”—“I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”! What stronger proof can we ask or have, that in view of the high endowments, and grander virtues of angel-natures, and the declared character of their ministrations, they influence *principle* as well as *events*; and that it is not more certain that they inspire wisdom, than it is, that they kindle zeal, and give force and vigor to all the impulses of Christian piety!

And thus it is seen, comprehensively, — for we must omit passages and examples, proofs and illustrations, almost innumerable, that angelic agency is employed to effectuate the schemes, and accomplish the purposes of Providence — to widen and perfect the reign and kingdom of Messiah, in the chastisement of evil, and the rewards of virtue. And also to subserve that great dispensation of the Spirit, intended to give efficacy and application to the entire system of human recovery, as taught in the Bible. What a complication of natures, agents, causes, effects, means, and influences, have we thus presented to our notice! And is there any want of fitness or analogy — any thing strange or improbable, that in a cause, confessedly of *heavenly origin and tendency*, God should employ *heavenly agents*, whose instrumentality is to concur, as we have attempted to show, with the more primary provisions of his counsels and grace, in effecting the great result of man's salvation?

### III. THE REFLECTIONS AND INFERENCES WITH WHICH WE CLOSE, MUST BE BRIEF AND GENERAL.

Let our first reflection be, that angelic agency is but *auxiliary*, and always *subordinate* to the will and purposes of *Almighty Wisdom and Goodness*.

And while we, every hour, honor God, by availing ourselves

of the help offered by the ministry of angels, let us not forget, that "God over all" is our only ground of ultimate trust. Let us receive these celestial helpers, as sent upon special ministry in our behalf—sent by God, because needed by us. Omniscient intelligence and kindness, can certainly employ *heavenly*, not less fitly and effectually than *human* instrumentality, in promoting human welfare.

Let it ever be borne in mind, that this world, which rose amid the worship and surprise of angels, can present no evil, fallen and sinful as it is, against which they are not prepared to defend us! We may not see them, but with wing of spirit and eye of fire, they are hovering about us! We may not see them, especially, as they have been seen, when "far off," as upon the hills of Bethlehem, "their coming shone." Or with armed magnificence and majesty of tread, as at the sepulchre, they shook the earth, when death was vanquished by the Son of God! We may have no note of their coming. It may be as the soft murmurs of *Siloah*, and with no ministry but that of the sigh and the tear! But come they will!

*Let the FACTS of inspiration assure us of the reality and value of their ministry.*

Did earth lay any nearer heaven, when man and angel met on earth, as under the oak of Mamre, or at the threshing-floor of Ornan! We may have no shores of *Hiddekel*, or banks of *Ulai* to look to, lighted up with the forms of angels, but the invisible camps of God are about us, as we stand in our lot, with *array* to encircle, and *shield* to protect!

Angelic agency refers all the different departments of the Divine administration, to a common headship, by a oneness and intercommunity of service and ministration. Whether they minister at heaven's altar, or go forth in burning mail—cloud the heavens in wrath, or stoop on soundless wing to bless, it is to subserve the one great purpose of universal being, in the final triumph of truth and virtue! And whether

they watch over the utter helplessness of individual want, or the pride and pomp of God's own Jerusalem, it is with *equal* interest—with the same fidelity! The eye that witnessed the overthrow of the Egyptians is still upon the path of God's people; and the ear that listened to Miriam's proud timbrel, as she flung her bold song upon the air of wilderness and sea, is open to catch the accents of kindred joy *wherever they may rise!*

The dignity and elevation of the ministry of angels, should remind us of the grandeur of our moral relations. Our moral history is, with *them*, an object of intense interest. They have found the great lesson of the cross, to be the most profound and disturbing of all God's mysteries, "which things the angels desire to look into." All the experience of eternity had not prepared the "principalities and powers in heavenly places," for the new and startling disclosures of the manifold wisdom of God in the history and fortunes of the Church! Intense is their sympathy with the cross—the Church—even "one sinner that repenteth." Forget not, that amid all God's chastening, and this world's cruel usage,—that *lonely* and *lorn* as may be your lot, and as *long* as you have to do with the task, the vigil, and the tear, they will be at your side, with ever-watchful care and ever-present aid!

*Angels and men constitute a common fellowship in the service of God.*

"Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels." An angel said to John, "I am thy fellow-servant."—"By whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."—"In heaven, *their* angels"—the angels of "God's little ones,"—"do always behold the face of my Father."—"Carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."—"Some have entertained angels." Would that this hospitality were less infrequent, and better understood, on earth! How fearful has been the punishment of earth's neglect, in this respect! The Bible points you to



many a spot, once vocal with angel-utterances, where nothing is now heard, but the sigh of the wind, or the hiss of the serpent! Where angels were wont to tread, as upon God's own ground, naught is now seen, but *here* utter desolation, and *there* godless impiety, gross and revolting as the morals of hell!

*Let the history of angelic interposition inspire trust and confidence,*

Enough of that history has been given to show what the whole must be. The whole Bible is lighted up with the effulgence of the story! The whole firmament of revealed truth is gemmed with the recital! A thousand fields of earth have been the homes of their mission! Recall some historic field of contest, as recorded in the Bible—let it be the conflict of Michael and his hosts with the Dragon and his legions—take the eve of encounter—what interest and expectation in heaven! And how must the streams of hell have forgot to roll—its winds to roar! And withdrawing your eye from the scene of conflict, look only at the grand moral result, extending to the present and the future,—the near and the distant, of the whole field of vision we have brought before you!

*Let the full impression of the facts thus brought to view settle upon our minds.*

Let us become students of the vision; and never fail to cherish the conviction, that angels are our invisible guides; and that under their secondary providence, God is training and preparing us for the high fruition and service of himself in heaven! See them, not only as they were seen in the Tabernacle and Temple, with eye on the ark, and wing dispread beside the mercy-seat, but see them *in action*, encamped about your homes, or burning above your march—smiting the first-born of Egypt, or the camps of Assyria—rolling the stone from the door of the sepulchre, sounding the trumpet, break-

ing the seals, emptying the vials, and reaping the harvest of the earth!

We recur to a single thought, and with it close.—In every sober view of the *enemies* and the *arms* of Christianity, how fitly and strikingly does the *guardianship* of angels, everywhere ministrant upon the path of humanity, contrast with the *assaults* of infernal agency, to which we are constantly exposed! Assailed and beleaguered by the whole host of infernals—prince and subaltern—the Devil and all his myriad vassals, we should recoil from the shock, and hope itself *turn pale*, but that we know a standard, almighty to protect and avenge, is lifted up against them! Immortal, invisible guardians, have made the quarrel their own, and a blow impends, before which even the defiance of hell is made to quail! We introduce such a view of the subject, fairly testing the collective *grandeur* and *resources*—the *elements* and the *issues* of *good* and *evil*, as typing and covering every possible instance of *conflict*—the entire *antagonism of light and darkness*, to which we have asked attention. It is no Pythian field, or Olympic arena, for a trial of strength! No bank of the Granicus, or plain of Pharsalia, where the bubble of empire is to be won or lost! *Here* are seraph shapes and cherub forms, covering it may be, half the breadth of heaven and earth—dispreparing in line and column their camps of fire and pavilions of light, as they gather for the contest! And *there*, in gloom and bale, rise the dark battlements of sin and hell! What a dread magnificence of array! How appallingly sublime are the movements of preparation—the girding for the conflict! But we turn away from the sight. The conflict, we repeat, is between good and evil—heaven and hell—and to know *this*, is to know the issue! A similar view is equally true of all kindred conflicts; and we leave you to apply the principle and its illustration. This life will present its intervals of eclipse, but the sun *still burns bright above!* Trial

and vicissitude may gloom and depress, but an unearthly loftiness of faith and trust, gives its light to the present, and its heaven to the future! The celestial guidance we assume, implies no freedom from trial and affliction, but assurance of triumph *in their midst*, and under all the possibilities of their occurrence and pressure! Our angel guards and guides are ever with us. In all their mighty orders and burning files, they continue to shield and sustain! Such is angelic agency—such its *elementary* place, and auxiliary functions, in the moral government of God. And thus, in perfect coadjustment with all the Divine plans and purposes, we realize the ministrations of angels, ever surrounding us to cheer and to bless; and meanwhile, destined to extend, in like manner, to ages and nations future and distant, until heaven and earth shall accord their triumph, in having redeemed the pledge they gave to the shepherds of Bethlehem,—“On earth peace, good will towards men!”

## SERMON IV

## THE DELUGE.

“And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.”—GEN. vi. 12-17.

On the present occasion, we propose a few remarks on the destruction of the old world by water. In calling your attention to this subject, we shall

1. FIRST, state the *fact* of a universal deluge, and endeavor to sustain its *credibility*.
2. SECONDLY, we shall contemplate the *occasion* and *design* of this dispensation.
3. THIRDLY, the *agency* and *means* employed to bring it about.
4. FOURTHLY, *answer objections*, tending to invalidate the truth and authenticity of the Mosaic account.
5. FINALLY, shall notice the *approach*, actual *existence*, and accompanying *circumstances* of the flood.

I. We consider the FACT of the DELUGE, and its EVIDENCES.

God's universe as inhabited by man, presents a vast collection of facts and incidents, highly interesting to the mind of every sentient being. How prodigious is the alternate production and waste of life and loveliness, incessantly occurring in every department of the great administration of nature! Although the universal God be lavish of his gifts, and prodigal of life, in the creation and government of the world, yet is he infinitely precise, mysterious, and unbending in his exactions. The laws of this grand material system are so arranged and determined in their operation, that we as often witness the extinction of life, and the waste of loveliness, as their production and continuance. The ever-recurrent scenes of life and death, in the constant roll of the seasons, and the annual workmanship of the Almighty, sustain the truth of this remark, and indicate the correctness of the assumption. Whenever man steps abroad, and sets his foot upon the grass of the earth, in the forest or field, he whelms in desolation many a little world of small, but active beings, that people, by myriads, every leaf and every blade. Every shower that waters the earth, every frost that nips autumnal vegetation, deals destruction, wide and complete, upon the crowded population of these innumerable little worlds. Almighty Providence displays the exuberance, the exhaustlessness of his resources, in producing and destroying. Under his plastic hand, we see teeming millions drinking existence, and we can everywhere trace the path of desolation through the regions of organic life. With equal facility, so far as his power is concerned, he can people or depopulate a single leaf, or a province of creation vast as the orb of Saturn! He knows no difference between lighting up a glowworm, and kindling a sun in heaven,—between the ruin of an insect, and a world

of immense diameter! To his power and immensity, labor and ease, height and depth, distance and magnitude, are all the same. Numbers incomprehensible and a single unit, are alike manageable in the plans and calculations of his omniscience. Enthroned, inconceivably exalted, above the highest orders of created being, the operations of his power are, to him, as easy as the decisions of his understanding, or the determinations of his will! Of the truth of these remarks, our world is a standing witness, and we the constant spectators. One scene of desolation after another has arrested the eye, and checkered the history of man immemorially. We know not where to begin or how to select. Look at the capital of ancient Greece, and that of the world's imperial mistress! The learning of the one and the empire of the other, enabled them to sway boundless dominion over the fortunes and commotions of the world; but time, with leaden step, now strides in ruin over the one and the other! The traveller, as he sits upon the prostrate pillar, hears no sound but the passing wind, as it sighs along the weird-encompassed portico of some mouldering temple! The temple and the amphitheatre, once crowded with the wits and masters of the globe, now shelter the bat and the serpent, and afford an asylum to the bird of night from the glare of noon!

These reflections, however, are particularly in point in relation to the signal ruin, the unutterable catastrophe, we are this day called upon to contemplate. The truth of the Mosaic story concerning the flood, is confirmed by the concurrent, and highly varied testimony of Scripture, of profane and civil history, geology in its review of the present and past state of the earth, and the opinions and traditions of all nations on this subject.

*First*, we remark then, by the way, the Scripture account you are familiar with. It states, there *was* a flood in the 1656th year of the world after the creation, and 2348 years

before the **Christian** era. The Scriptures affirm, moreover, that the deluge was universal—"over *all* the earth, under the *whole* heaven;" and that "every living thing upon the earth died," except the living cargo in the ark.

*Secondly*, profane and civil history.—Records of this fact are found in all the more important histories of the world.—In the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Jewish, the Chaldean, the Phenician, the Greek, the Roman, and the Indian,—**eight** of the most noted empires of the ancient world.

The celebrated historians, Josephus and Eusebius, quote Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Berosus the Chaldean, Hieronymus the Egyptian, Monetho and Nicholas of Damascus, also Manaseas, Abydenus, and Alexander Polyhister, as well as Jerome the Egyptian. And to these we may add Plato, Plutarch, Ovid, Homer, and Lucian. The identity between the Prometheus and Osiris, the Xisuthrus, and Deucalion, of profane antiquity, and the Noah of Moses, is very remarkable, and cannot be doubted. Plutarch makes his Osiris enter the ark on the same day that Moses does Noah—the 17th of Athyr, the second month after the autumnal equinox, when the sun was passing the scorio. If then, the most respectable histories of antiquity are to be credited, profane as well as sacred, the destruction of the old world by water, is a most interesting and momentous verity.

*Thirdly*, Geology.—All our accredited notices of the internal structure and external surface of the globe, conspire to sustain the fact of a universal deluge. The fossilized remains of animals evidently belonging to a former world, found in every quarter of the globe—upon the heights of the Andes, the Alps, the Appenines, the Pyrenees, Libanus, Atlas, and Ararat, can only be accounted for, upon the assumption of a general deluge. In fact, all the mountains, from Japan to Mexico, of every region under heaven, conspire in their uniform and universal proof that the waters of the sea were once spread over *all* their

summits. For they contain, incorporated with strata unmoved for ages, shells, skeletons, and marine animals, of every kind. For example, the elephant and rhinoceros, natives *only* of Africa and southern Asia, are found, in great abundance, in Tartary and Siberia. The Asiatic crocodile is found in Europe. The mammoth, supposed to belong exclusively to the antediluvian world, is found in Russia, in Germany, in Ireland, and in this country. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, and the hyena, are all found, in their fossilized state, in England. These all must have been brought from Africa and the remote East. Upon a mountain of Peru, imbedded in vast aggregated masses of rock and strata, are found marine animals of various kinds, 14,220 feet above the common level of the sea. Upon the granite mountains of the frozen ocean, upon Labolca, upon Chimborazo, and upon the vast chain of Alpine mountains, upon the mountains of Siberia, Caucasus, the calcareous Alps of Savoy, and the vast Uralian mountains, are found every description of submarine and testaceous animals, three or four miles above the level, and hundreds of miles distant from the seas in which *alone* they are found. The organic remains, therefore, of a former world, show clearly, the *truth* and *universality* of an ancient deluge.

The phenomena of which we speak, must have been the result of design and violence. The earth was shaken to her unknown centre; and ruin piled the relics of the ocean upon the summit of the mountain. It would seem, that the billows of the flood, with resistless momentum, hurled in every direction of the globe, shattered and desolated the superincumbent strata, and elevated the beds of primeval seas to the tops of the Alps and the Andes, and other kindred elevations of the earth! The geological phenomena of which we predicate these remarks, must have been accomplished by some vast commotion, equally affecting the sea and the dry land, and destroying the limits of their mutual separation. The earth



seems to have been reduced to its primeval state, and given over to the dominion of the waves. We are aware, that we gain access to this subject through the portals of natural theology, but the word of God does not disdain the illustration of his works; and in this way we authenticate the assumption, that practical geology everywhere presents us with the fragments of an earlier world; and earth, in its hidden recesses and superior strata, is exhibited as a heap of ruins.

*Tradition.*—It is remarkable that the allowable records of all nations, except the Jewish account, can be traced no farther back than the deluge. This divides the higher from the lower age of time. Here antiquity commences, and they can follow the glimmering light of tradition no farther; and the farther back we go, the more vivid are the traces of this event. Traditions have obtained on this subject, everywhere and in every age. Among the Hindoos, the Burmans, the Chinese, the ancient Goths and Druids, the Peruvians, the Brazilians, the Mexicans; also among the inhabitants of almost all newly discovered islands and countries. Such as West Caledonia, the Otaheitans, the Machoacans, the Iroquois, and the Sandwich Islanders. And as God intended it never to be forgotten, he has engraved the fact upon the altar of the universe, by the hand of demonstration.

II. We next contemplate the OCCASION and DESIGN of this dispensation.

1. The avoidable wickedness and voluntary degradation of man. 2. The vindication of the Divine honor. 3. Purposes of mercy to our common nature, subsequent to the deluge, and throughout all future generations.

1. Man might have avoided the wickedness—he might have shunned the degradation, which rendered his destruction necessary; but as he would not, the vindication of God's insulted honor, required his public and exemplary punishment. How many of the intelligences in heaven, and in other worlds,

were witnesses of this scene, we cannot tell. God may have seen it necessary, to preserve the allegiance of other worlds, and even of angels in heaven; for if one part of his creation could sin with impunity, why not another?

Again, it may have been done in mercy to thousands of the antediluvians themselves. God may have seen that nothing short of such a stupendous display of his justice, would bring them to repentance, in relation to their immortal interests. He saw, especially, the effect it would have on future man—the high and commanding tone it would give to his laws and government—to works of piety, and the diffusion of practical godliness. He saw it would inspire fear and wake up dread in the heart of man, to the latest generation. Hence, the improvement of this awful event, by our Lord and the Apostle Peter. Private revenge or latent punishment, suited not the views of Heaven. Other and important ends were to be achieved; and in order to this, the whole dispensation was to be open to the view of all intelligences in heaven, earth, and hell. Accordingly, this fearful visitation, set the seal of Heaven upon the Patriarchal religion. It was a Divine and unequivocal attestation of its truth. And the sons of Noah went forth for ages, bearing the deep impression; nor could the information fail to be largely noised abroad, as a lesson of admonition among the subsequent nations of the earth.

In further illustration of this subject, let us attend, a little more minutely, to the antediluvian history; and mark some of its leading facts and features. And *first*, the goodness of God abused. More than fifteen centuries had consecrated to the memory and the gratitude of man, the goodness and long forbearance of Heaven, ere God revealed his purpose to destroy all flesh from off the face of the earth, except an inconsiderable righteous remnant, in the family of Noah. From Adam up to this date, the multiplied and extended families of the earth, had been blessed with incredible vigor of consti-

tution, and an atmosphere and seasons, whose salubrity and fruitfulness contributed to lengthen human life to almost a thousand years—a longevity altogether unknown in any age or part of the world since the flood. But this very longevity was converted into a curse instead of a blessing; and with the mass of antediluvian population, tended only to harden men in crime, and confirm them in a course of immoral habit and irregular passion. The earth was filled with blood and violence.

*Secondly*, If we examine the extent and universality of this corrupt state of things, we find it was not confined to a *few*—“all flesh” had corrupted its way. This criminal defection—this voluntary—this suicidal reprobation had become universal. After the death of Seth, Lamech, and Methuselah, it embraced all the families in the old world, except *one*. If our calculations are governed by the ordinary laws of population, it would not be difficult to show, that the antediluvian, exceeded the present population of the earth, even in the 1200th year of the world, by something very considerable. We will suppose only twenty persons existing at the close of the first one hundred years. We will suppose that this number doubled only every fifty years; which is a very moderate computation; for then men lived eight times as long as they do now; and in some countries, even now, the population is doubled every twenty-five years. But to adopt fifty as the ratio, in the year that Noah entered the ark, the earth must have contained more than twenty billions of human souls. That is, more than thirty times as many as all the nations of the earth number at present. But reduce the computation twenty-nine thirtieths, and you have a multitude equal to the entire population of the globe at this time. And these, we are told, were all “corrupt before God,” and “every imagination of the heart was only evil, and that continually.” We know what the presumption and wickedness of man are, now that he is only allowed to live three-score years and ten; and

what may we not presume the wickedness of man was then, when his foolish heart told him he might spend a half dozen centuries in crime, and then have two or three more in which to repent, and prepare himself for his final audit.

We must, however, remark, *thirdly*, that progress in crime, as in every thing else, is gradual. Crimes that shock men, during the ingenuousness of youth, they, after a vicious course of training, come to commit with a relish—an ecstasy such as infernals feel. A thousand years' indulgence in the forbidden varieties of sin, countenanced by thousands all around, must present a sinner—a rebel against God, of no common mould; and such the antediluvians were. It is not only probable that men were corrupt and unholy in their disposition and practice, but from various intimations in the inspired account we have of the old world, the million—the great mass of mankind were given to rapine, plunder and blood, as well as every species of social infidelity. Witness the fratricide of Cain—the assassination of Abel—the earth filled with violence and blood—the sons of God corrupted by the daughters of men; that is, the sons of the Church connecting themselves with the infidel daughters of Cain; and now, instead of being seen as wont, around God's blazing altars, prostrate before the passing vision, like Absalom, in aftertimes, we find them only renowned in the annals of dissoluteness, crime, and blood. No heart can divine the debasement and meanness into which sin had sunk them. They were a generation of monsters, not to be reclaimed or reformed: many were the efforts to this effect, but all in vain.

*Fourthly*, we may be permitted, however, to instance a few of the means used for their salvation. The history of their progenitor's apostacy and curse, must have been fresh in their recollection. The same mouth that received it from Adam gave it to Noah. The promise, the altar, and the propitiation, were all before them. Enoch overstepped the grave, and

went home to heaven in their sight. The hoary locks of Methuselah had reproved the sin and folly of the age. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to them. The Spirit of Christ preached to them, according to St. Peter; but all to no purpose. An omniscient survey of all this wickedness sickened the heart of God, and he repented that he had made man. He determined on a change of dispensation toward him. He determined to appear in other character than they had ever witnessed. He determined on penal infliction, and punitive visitation. As the mild accents of paternal affection and fatherly persuasion were ineffectual, he resolved to speak to them in notes of thunder and the tempest.

*Fifthly*, mark the *publicity* of the deed, and the *effect* it was intended to produce. As the ministrations of his kindness had been public and magnificent, as well as the wickedness of man, bold and abandoned, so he determined to overthrow them in all the terror and grandeur of a universal ruin. This description of bold, obtrusive pomp and display, has marked all the grand eventful epochs of human history and human destiny. This variety of preparation—this splendor of address, is in perfect accordance with the principles of our own constitution, resulting from the laws of the great administration of the universe. On any day of general joy, all we can wield, even dumb nature, is put in requisition to tell the strong emotions that thrill the bosom. We augment the solemnities of guilt, by signalizing our movements, in all the pomp of woe. Even the malefactor dies in awful state; and those appendages of justice designed to deepen and extend the impression, offer an homage to public sensibility. When man was turned out of Eden, heavenly sentinels were publicly stationed to guard the passes of the ancient Paradise. Enoch and Elijah were not silently wrapt to the bosom of the Deity; but the pomp of his messengers, and his chariots of fire, told the glory of their triumph. The opening earth and

ingulfing chasm sealed the lesson of Abiram's ruin. When God would publish his law to wandering Israel, he wrapt the mountain in smouldering cloud and bickering flame. And the solemnities of the final judgment, are arranged upon the same principle. The trumpet of eternity shall sound, long and loud, in all the grandeur of unequal array. Messiah shall plant his great white throne aloft, and range on either hand, the interminable ranks of heaven's high principalities and powers! It was in perfect harmony with these maxims of judgment and principles of action, that the deluge, an awful and universal calamity, was announced, by a long train of preparation and prophecy, and executed with every appendage of terror and alarm!

*Sixthly*, let us notice a few preliminary incidents. God addressed himself to the unbelief and security of man, for 120 years; and for 120 years man set at naught the warnings and counsel of Heaven! In tender consideration of creation's wants and miseries, God allowed them a period of 120 years, and intimates that during that period of time, but not always, his Spirit should strive with them. Noah lifted his warning voice, and sounded the note of preparation—his life, his lessons, his movements preached, but in vain. When, on Shinar's wooded plain, he lay the first huge beam of that stupendous vessel, destined to preserve a sample of all creation from the general ruin, no doubt, he was treated with insult and contumely. He was the jest of the fool, and the scorn of the skeptic—the theme of the ballad, and the song of the drunkard; but he patiently wrought at his ark, and continued to preach righteousness to all around him, until the predestined hour of judgment and of fate arrived. Lamech, the father of Noah, paid the debt of nature five years before the deluge. Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah, laid him down in peace only a few months before. These men had been cotemporaries with the first that were created, and the last

that lived in the old world. Lamech continuing with Adam fifty-seven years, and Methuselah twenty-four years. And now the stage was clear, why should judgment linger, or perdition sleep? Judgment did not linger, nor did perdition sleep. The ark is completed. It is provisioned; and Heaven-directed—by an instinct from God, the beasts, the fowls, and the reptiles, seek their refuge, and the vessel receives its strange, mysterious cargo. The clean animals by *sevens*, probably for the purposes of sacrifice, as well as to restock the earth; the unclean by *pairs*. This short week, spent in lading the ark, is the last of the world's long respite. And did they not repent at the preaching of Noah? No, they laughed him to scorn, and poured contempt upon his ministrations. And now I see the hoary man of God wipe the last tear of insulted pity from his eye, and enter the ark amid the contemptuous shoutings of the ungodly multitude. Every thing being in a state of readiness, it *only* remained for judgment to be executed, and it was so.

### III. THE AGENCY AND MEANS EMBARKED IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE THREATENED JUDGMENT.

1. *First, the Agency.* It is omnipotence—the power of God. He announces the adoption of the measure, and pledges himself for its execution. “Behold,” says he, “I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.” This is enough; every difficulty must melt away under his resistless operations.

2. *Secondly, the Means.* The earth was to be destroyed by the instrumentality of water, suddenly and irresistibly overflowing every district and portion of it. Earth, as the seat of man's residence, and his allotted theatre of action, was to be identified in fate and destiny with man. Hence, it was originally cursed with man, and is *now* to be destroyed with him. The waters above the firmament, are now to mingle

with those below, as in the chaotic, primordial state of the elements; and the ordained result, is the inundation of the earth—the drowning of the globe. The windows, or flood-gates of heaven are to be opened, and the foundations of the great deep broken up. The means are abundant, and the agency almighty,—no less than incensed, enraged Omnipotence. And the result must soon be realized.

God would not utterly destroy the world at this early period; for this would reflect upon his wisdom in having made it, and would afford matter of triumph to the powers of darkness. He would not destroy man from off the earth, by war, famine, and pestilence; for these might have been attributed to other causes than his righteous purposes.

Again, he would not destroy the world by *fire*; for then it could not have been repaired and replenished, without a new creation. Hence, he determined to bring a flood, that would sweep from the earth its life-sharing millions, and yet, in the preservation of Noah and family, admit of the restoration of the world to its ancient glory and multitude. By the instrumentality of water, therefore, God intends to destroy the world. He is the Almighty agent, and a flood the dreadful instrument of the world's destruction!

IV OBJECTIONS ANSWERED. The two principal objections, urged by infidelity to the prejudice of the Mosaic account, relate to the *quantity* of water, and *size* of the ark, necessary to sustain the narrative of Moses.

It is tauntingly asked, “whence all this water?” and “where a vessel of sufficient size?” We shall attend to these objections separately.

1. If it be asked, “Whence all this water?” We point to that hand that first dug the channels of the deep, and threw around our globe its attenuated air! We quote the resources of Omnipotence! Would you know *how* Omnipotence did



it, let Omniscience tell; and Omniscience *has told* the fearful story in the first book of Moses, and elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures.

But we will examine this objection upon more sober and philosophic principles, as some would have it. *First*, the few geological intimations we have of the original condition of the earth, in the Scriptures, teach us that it contained, in its central parts, vast quantities of water. Hence, it is said to be "founded upon the floods,"—to have "stood in the water and out of the water," and that "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the mighty waters;" "God has laid up the deep in those storehouses;" "The foundations of the abyss were strengthened;" that is, by being covered or arched over with earth. And many other passages hold the same language. This view of the subject seems also to be favored by the modern philosophy of the earth.

2. For, were the earth a solid mass of rock, mineral or metal, it would be vastly more ponderous than it is now known to be. Hence, the strong probability, that large, internal cavities of the earth are filled with water. This seems necessary to account for the comparative lightness of the whole mass. The mean density of the globe is ascertained to be four times greater than the same bulk of water would be. Hence, in view of the foregoing remarks, the probability in favor of immense collections of water in the bowels of the earth, is strengthened. When, therefore, the internal organization was destroyed, the heavier crust of the earth would fall, and at every *such* fall, the waters from beneath would spout *above* and overflow the surface.

3. That there is an immense abyss in the centre of our globe, the waters of which, by means of some subterranean hiatus, passages, or apertures, communicate with the seas and oceans that are visible, is evident from reason as well as Scripture. Instance the Caspian and the Mediterranean seas,

which have no visible outlet, and yet are receiving, and have been for ages, immense quantities of water. The latter, beside many and immense rivers, receives an incalculable quantity from two large and strong currents from the ocean; one at the Propontis, and the other at the Straits of Gibraltar. It will not do to say, that these waters pass off by vapor and exhalation; for it is a well-established fact, that the dews and rain return all that is thus taken away by evaporation. These seas and others, therefore, must have communication with those vast internal cavities of the earth; and these again, with the ocean.

4. If we take the whole face of the globe, from the Arctic to the Antarctic circles, we shall find that nearly three-fourths of the whole surface is water; and it is likely the same proportion obtains throughout the solid contents of the globe. Hence, there could be no want of water for such a catastrophe.

5. Again, take the lowest computation of the earth's circumference—twenty-one thousand miles. Its diameter must be seven thousand. From the superficies, then, to the centre, must be three thousand five hundred. Allow the crust of the earth to be two hundred miles thick, there would still remain three thousand three hundred of water. Or if we allow one thousand seven hundred miles of solid earth, there would still remain one thousand eight hundred of water; and any material derangement in the relative position of the two bodies, might produce a flood of the description recorded in the book of Genesis.

6. But it is reduced to a certainty, in the operations of chemical philosophy, that water expands one twenty-fifth of its whole magnitude, from freezing to a boiling temperature. We will suppose, then, that its heat, previous to the deluge, was fifty degrees, which is nearly the temperature of this climate. Between the tropics it is eighty-three degrees, and yet marine animals abound here. An increase then of twenty-

three degrees heat, not destroying animal life, would have produced an increase of water, more than necessary to have overflowed the whole earth, according to the Mosaic account. Such is the reasoning of Sir Henry Englefield.

7 The earth in its chaotic state, if it were not all a fluid mass, was at least, according to the Scripture account, covered with water; and the same quantity of water, in the days of Noah, might have covered it again, even fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains.

8. Admit then, an exertion of Divine power, as we must, and all that is necessary in order to a flood such as Moses describes, will be disorganization in the earth's parts and conformation, and the descent of the immense waters, for the retention of which, the atmosphere and firmamental regions undoubtedly have the quality and capacity. Hence, God is said to "bind up his waters in a bag, and to seal the clouds that it rain not on the earth." This quality and capacity of the atmosphere and higher regions of the firmament, for the retention of an immense body of water, is further evidenced in the phenomena of drought and exhalation. During the time of drought, evaporation must always be increased, owing to the increased action of the sun upon the waters. And in the case of vapor, it has been demonstrated by experiment, that a single acre of ground on which no rain has fallen for thirty days, will produce, in twelve hours, one thousand six hundred gallons of water.

9. But in addition to all this, who knows the secret store-houses of the Almighty,—his magazines of rain, and hail, and snow? Who has fathomed the unknown depths of the ocean? Has its surface been spread out before the eye, like the surface of Salisbury plain? Who ever saw the God of tempest marshalling his waterspouts, and heard deep calling to deep for the fearful rendezvous? Your negative furnishes the proof that Heaven has the means, and can be at no loss

to bring a flood upon the earth. Only let the waters from above meet those beneath—let the crust of the earth be broken in, and vast masses of earth be thrown into the beds of primeval seas, and the result is, a deluge such as Moses records!

But to return to the agency embarked in this mighty ruin.—He whose Almighty form is pavilioned with clouds and tempests—he who weighed the world's foundations—he who confined his mighty compass, and assigned, wide o'er the waves, a pathway to the wind—he who sustains this ball with all its burden of oceans and continents—he who poured the congregated waters into the prepared abyss—he who heaved the floods, and fixed the trembling land—who chained old ocean in his bed, and coerced obedience by the mandate,—“hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther,”—he who spoke, and the bubbling spring welled from the bosom of the flinty rock—who walled the highway of Israel by the billows of the sea—who astonished the waters of Jordan, when they fled from the rod of his prophet—who silenced the stormy wave of Galilee, and bowls the ocean in his hand—he can bring a flood and drown the world!

2. *Secondly*, we shall briefly examine the objection with regard to the SIZE of the Ark.

Arbuthnot, Stackhouse, Greaves, Whiston, and others, have shown very conclusively, that the cubit of Moses was 21 inches. If so, the ark was 547 feet long, 91½ feet broad, and more than 54 feet in height; and its solid contents were 2,730,782 solid feet; and would have admitted a storage of 81,062 tons. Or, reduce the cubit to 18 inches, and we are perfectly safe in every thing we have predicated of the ark. We are even then prepared for a burden of 42,413 tons.

A first rate man-of-war is between 2,200 and 2,300 tons burden; consequently, the ark had the capacity of eighteen such ships. These would carry 20,000 men, 18,000 of the

largest pieces of artillery, together with all necessary provisions and military stores, for the length of time Noah was in the ark. The ark was divided into three stories, each containing about one hundred and fifty thousand solid cubits, and furnishing an area of about a *half acre*. It can be geometrically shown, that each floor would accommodate five hundred horses, allowing nine square feet to each horse. And yet, taking the number and size of the living creatures, it would not be difficult to demonstrate, that two hundred and fifty horses, would amount to more actual weight, than all the animals in the ark. Take, therefore, Buffon's classification, or Wilkins', or Goldsmith's; and with these, the *sevens* and the *pairs* of Moses, and we shall not have, altogether, more than two thousand living creatures in the ark; and these might all have been accommodated upon *one floor* of the vessel. Had the narrative of Moses, quoted eighteen ships of 2,200 tons burden each, as the equipment of Noah, the story of the flood would never have been questioned, on the ground of meagre preparation; and yet the ark had more *weight-capacity* than all these together. Thus you see, there was abundant room in the ark for Noah and family, all the creatures, all necessary provisions, together with utensils, grain, and seed, to restock and furnish the earth. Our difficulty, therefore, is, not to find room in the ark, but to find enough, agreeably to the directions given, to fill it. We could have stored away there, a very handsome assortment of all those fellows who, in the shape of nibbling critics, have cavilled about the flood, from the days of Noah down to Sir John Phillips!

V *We now come to the concluding scene of this fearful drama.*

Brightly on the morning of the righteous family's entrance into the ark, the sun rose above the eastern plains. In the

fulness of his strength he shot his accustomed beams, as he rode a cloudless sky, and climbed the hill of heaven! All promised the stability of former times. All things went on as usual. They planted and builded—they married and were given in marriage, up to the hour when God shut Noah and his family in the ark, there to remain, floating on the mighty waste, for twelve months and eleven days! But appearances are deceptive, even on the face of the heavens. In an hour, universal nature was swathed in darkness. The busy songsters of the wood and grove sat silenced and terrified. The beasts of the forest, startled and dismayed, seek their places of refuge. The horror-struck antediluvian looked round, in speechless consternation, on his fellow, and lifting his eye again, he sees the vivid lightning-glance, where late played the beam of heaven; and anon the rushing of the tempest, and the roaring of the thunder, hurl confusion, dismay, and desolation, on the scene, late tranquil and smiling in all its summer's pride!

All this would be the more shocking, as the people of the old world had been probably unused to any thing like tempests, or if otherwise, they saw that this was one to destroy, and not to bless and fructify the earth. The design, as expressed by God himself to Noah, was to destroy "every living thing under heaven," except the remnant miraculously preserved in the ark. It was to make havoc throughout universal nature, and shorten the ordinary duration of human life, by deranging the whole structure of the material world. The tremendous magnitude of the disaster, and the violence of the revolution necessary to accomplish this, can readily be conceived. Hence, the heavens gathered blackness, and the thunders shook the earth, when the Creator rose, in the awfulness of his power, to vindicate his righteous judgments upon a world of guilty culprits! Many of you have witnessed sights of horror, at which nature sickened and shrunk, but

your most dreadful tornadoes are but the sighing of the breeze, your deluges of rain are but the gentle dew, Etna and Vesuvius, with all their volcanic horrors, are a squib—the tempest and the thunder you have heard, are but the diversions of a stage-play, compared with the scene we essay to describe—when the heavens changed their livery, and put on the garniture of death—when clouds, raked by whirlwinds, flew in thick succession, as if winged by the lightnings that darted from their sides—when the deluging cataracts, precipitated from the hearts of heaven, were met, midway, by the cataracts spouted from the yawning earth! But the darkness of the heavens, the crashing of the thunder, the trembling and turmoil of the waters, are only preparations in this tremendous drama. The earth began to reel—its crust was broken—chasms in its side appeared—mountains heaved, and were cleft in twain upon their wide-spread bases—rocks, the mammoth bones of this huge earth—rocks that no volcano could heave, that no earthquake could upseat, were broken and tossed, by a thousand leagues, from the places that gave them birth!

On the very day that Noah entered the ark, “the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up.” God, who marshals the waters of the universe, gave the mandate to the vasty deep, and old ocean, like him of Gaza, rising in his wrath, with majestic and turmoiling heave, shot his cataracts of flood, ten thousand fathoms high, ten thousand fathoms wide; and the frantic earth, obeying the same behest, rivalled the maddening deep, and teemed her oceans by the hour!

Open your eyes, if indeed you can use them,—if the conception do not annihilate you; on either hand, you see the unsustained immense of waters gushing—beneath and about are roaring seas, and foaming gulfs, and rumbling reservoirs; and above you, death-jawed tempests howl for prey, and lash, with league-long wings, the trembling deeps; and these, in

impetuous fury, roll on crags, and rocks, and steepes of thundering mountains, and of trembling hills! Which way you turn your eye, through all the rolling vast, the adverse tides still higher rise, and higher still the counter-torrents—dark, stupendous, desolating, and wild—burying creation's millions—man, and beast, and fowl, in undistinguished ruin! While cities, domes, and fanes, the wealth and pride of haughty princedoms, swelled the groaning wreck! Look yet once more! Not after the ark or its humble fortunes! but look, and read the epitaph of crime, and end of sinners! Where now are the bold infidels of antediluvian memory—those gigantic rebels against God, and the religion of his prophet? Methinks I see them on every height, and every battlement, and every hill; but the ascending surge mocks the resistance of the mountain—they are reached and swept away! And now, God of destruction! what a scene ensues! Athwart the turbid deep outstretched, the sturdy giants, we behold, roll back, with strong-nerved arm, the darkly trembling wave, till with fatigue overpowered, in mad despair, they grasp convulsively the floating drifts, and are no more! We can pursue them no farther—the billow and the surge must tell the rest, and moan their requiem!

Desolations so tremendous must soon have approved themselves to the infidels of the deluge, as the accomplishment of God's express declaration. It would seem, the work of death was so sudden, that very little time was given for the gradual accumulation of horror upon horror. You may imagine, but it was only for an hour, or a few at most, the heart-rending spectacle of supplicating thousands surrounding the ark, and amid the shrieks of despair, and the horrors of the dying, imploring admittance. You may imagine the descending torrent beating down, and bearing away, the adventurous and unsheltered—mud-walled cottages upset, and buildings of firmer mould, unroofed and borne away, with all within



You may depict to yourselves scenes of agony, not indeed of long protraction, where the multitude, amid the tossing of the mountains, and tumbling of the floods, sought to scale the most contiguous heights, and live, if but a moment longer—infants clinging, from the strength that death gave them, to those who bare them; and *these*, in their turn, with dying fondness, and in silent anguish, seeking death in the arms of those they loved and trusted!

Soon the ruin was completed, and every memorial of God's dishonor, and human crime, was done away! Proud rode the ark of the prophet upon the bosom of the interminable mass of waters, late congregated for the purposes of judgment; and now, no noise disturbed the silent grandeur of the scene, save the occasional howling of the tempest, and now and then, a mountain nodding to its fall! For seven long months, the water stood fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains. It was a world of waters,—an ocean without a shore. For a hundred and fifty days, on all the watery waste, nothing was seen—was discernible, save one small and moving speck, and *that* was the ark containing God's little family! This mighty ball, for the space of seven tedious months, presented the silence, as well as the stillness of un-death! There was no dashing of the waters, for they found no shore against which to aim their shock—no rippling of the surge, for the winds of heaven were chained. It was universal silence over the universal waste—a still, but awful lecture on the justice of high Heaven—on the sure and certain retribution of wilful impenitence!

In descanting upon this penal flood—this angry baptism of the universe, we cannot forbear again calling your attention to the ark, and its great cargo of rational and irrational life. You and I were there, my friends, if we were made in the week in which God finished the works of this lower world. It was a rich, and invaluable casket, upon which the eye of God

was steadfastly bent, during its long embarkation upon the waters of the interminable waste. There floated the germ of all the various nations of the earth, since famous in the annals of the world. *There*, pent up within that narrow circuit, were the pledges of all that roam the forest, or animate the landscape—that make the hills and valleys vocal, or that glance their varied plumage before the midday sun! What a vision must this have been! How immense the vessel, with its lading of life—its burden of animated being, floating upon the billowy waste, unwieldy and unwielded, without rudder or compass—the current its mover, and God its guide! Imagine the surges that lashed, and the billows that heaved the ark—the mountains that fell—the plains that sunk—the volcanoes that burst, and the vertiginous whirl and heaving of the waters! But Noah was within, and God was his friend! This was enough,—and they were all safely landed in a world restored!

Eventful story! Mysterious dispensation! How fruitful of alarm, and encouragement to man! It was indeed,

“A scene so sad, Almighty Pity swore,  
The wasteful waters should destroy no more.”

On the eighteenth day of December, in the year of the world 1657, after that the ark had been stranded upon the summit of Ararat, from the preceding May, the debarkation of Noah, the *orphan* of the old world, and *father* of the new, is celebrated. He looked about on the once populous earth, and all was a scene of utter ruin and dilapidated grandeur. But without delay, he hastens to offer a rich hecatomb to the God of his salvation; and from the mercy-seat of God, this sacrifice met with a marked reception. You that worship God in your families, conceive for a moment the prophet's little family gathering around the loaded altar. You can almost catch the fervor of their supplications that mounted with the

flame of that amazing sacrifice, as it peered high toward the heavens! It was *this* that dispelled the chill that seized their bosoms, when they first set their foot on earth again, and their hearts sighed for the families they had loved, and the friends they had lost. It was the fire of God's blazing altar, that disarmed the piercing winds of December, that played cold and keen about the mountain's foot.

God now enters into solemn compact with Noah; and the amplitude of the covenant embraces all mankind. He tenders his protection and blessing. He increases the facilities, and multiplies the comforts of life; and in signal to the nations, and Noah especially, he rears his noble arch, and bends his brilliant bow in the heavens—the grand memorandum of his own eternal mind and mercy, and the sacramental seal of earth's security! And although more than four thousand years have rolled away, the fact is still in consonance with the symbol; and *now*, in the year of the world 5833, 4100 years after the solemn appointment, we see this public and visible exemplification of the truth of God, and fidelity of his covenant, almost as often as the retiring clouds of the tempest sweep the face of heaven, and the receding thunders murmur in the distance from us!

## SERMON V

## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”—LUKE ii. 10–14.

You are aware, my friends, that according to the ordinary chronological calculus of Christendom, we are again, in the revolutions of time, thrown near the birthday of the world's redemption.

The memory of nature's birth is sunk, in that of the world's deliverance. The sight of joyous millions drinking in existence, was indeed sublime; but it is lost in the vision of a ruined world, rising from the gates of death and shades of hell, into liberty, light and life. Men were now to be released from the ritual of the Old, and become the pupils of the New dispensation.—For “the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

This was the mercy of mercies—the great absorbing display of Heaven's kindness. It was the last, crowning dispensation of God to men. It was the era of this world's freedom and glory. And is it possible, that hell can still boast her infidels and advocates, in the eighteen hundred and twenty-ninth year of the world's redemption! Heaven and earth forbid!—And yet, how true!

We propose a brief glance at the following particulars:—

1. *The character and claims of the messenger.*
2. *The peculiar nature, and undoubted origin of the mes-*
3. *sage.*
4. *Its characteristic features, and specific import.*
5. *The address of the message.*
6. *It is matter of gratitude.*
7. *Extent and range of the mission.*
8. *The accomplishment of the Divine purpose in the birth of Christ.*
9. *He is the Saviour.*
10. *He is Christ the Lord.*
11. *The confirmation, theme, and celebration.—And may God be with us!*

#### I. THE CHARACTER AND CLAIMS OF THE MESSENGER.

The competency of the messenger is proved by the fact, that he was deputed and sent by Heaven; and that he did, at the appointed time, faithfully and intelligibly, report the subject-matter of his mission. It is also to be inferred, from the nature and attributes of the messenger.—He was “an angel of the Lord.” Angels are an order of beings, who, in the regularly graduated scale of being, connect God with man.—The first-born sons of God—the prime and promise of Heaven’s creatures—the first favorites of his reign—the early pupils of his wisdom. They excel in strength. They possess a measure of endowment—a description of intellect—a power of conception—a range and compass of thought, to which no human being has any claims; and form a happy link between the mind of man, and the infinitely perfect—the all-enfolding mind of God. A being of this order, must have been competent to report, with unerring accuracy, upon the subject that formed the theme of his communications. Angels are the elder children of his power. They are purely spiritual—free

from corporeity, and unencumbered by body or matter. Beside, dwelling in the immediate presence of the Eternal, and having access to the intelligence that circulates in his pavilion, we are compelled to concede the entire competency of the angel to make the requisite report.

He was the angel "of the Lord"—one in whose truth and fidelity, God himself reposed. One who knew not to err. This is clearly inferable from the fact, that he acted under the care and direction of Heaven. One whose mind was not only expansively informed, but whose feelings also, were purely and supremely allegiant. One who, having kept his first estate, in all the pride and purity of untarnished rectitude, was worthy the charge, and prepared for the duties of such an embassy from the King of kings.

Finally, we infer the competency of the messenger from the privileges and employments of the heavenly hosts. That angelic natures are not only exalted by natural, but by ministerial dignity, is plain from the Scriptures. The herald who, from heaven's canopy, first sung the natal hymn of the world's Redeemer, may have shared the confidence, and flown upon the errands of his Maker, from half eternity. Hence, his accredited competency to report the tidings in the text.

Next, look at the *authority* of the messenger.

The preternatural occurrences and phenomena attendant upon the scene, show, in the most obvious manner, that the messenger was Divinely accredited. A part of his message lay open to the inspection, and was abundantly attested, by the outward senses of mankind. They went and found it, even as the angel had told them. Notice the visible appearance of the angel.—Angels can only wing and limb themselves at God's pleasure,—not their own. They are strictly dependent. See also, the evidence of "a multitude of the heavenly host," descending at the time. The preternatural star that appeared for a time, performed its destined functions, and was

then blotted out of the heavens for ever. Look at the visible display of the Divine glory—the opening heavens **around** them shone!

Again, the angel was disinterested. He was not a sharer in the scenes of redemption, but only a spectator. He intended only our good. Our ill, he could not have designed; for the process was directly opposed to the infliction of ill of any kind. He was late from heaven, and recent from the throne of God. Lastly, see the evidence, of authority, from the visible and triumphant return of the messenger and his associates into heaven.

## II. THE NATURE OF THE MESSAGE.

It was a revelation of the purposes and plans of the Deity. It was not a tale of his own. It was not an unauthorized, gratuitous embassy; but one of special getting up and special charge by God himself. These things were disclosures made to the angel, and by him reported to the shepherds. “*I bring*”—I am not the author, or sender of the intelligence—I am only the herald in trust, to give it to man—I report not my own views and feelings, but the true sayings of God, and facts of which your own senses can judge. It was from heaven: warm from the lips and mouth of God. The supposition that one of the heavenly intelligences would enter upon the perilous embarkation, and prosecute a descent to our world, for the hateful purpose of imposing on human credulity, is so monstrous an anomaly, that its belief is impossible! “*I bring you good tidings,*”—designs of mercy revolved from everlasting in the mind of God—I bring you a summary transcript of the Divine purposes, now matured for evolution, and in the fulness of time, revealed for publication, and universal reception among men. It is plain, therefore, that the angel was but the bearer of the message; and a faithful discharge of duty, was all he consulted. He was an envoy extraordinary,

sent on an embassy of mercy to fallen man. He gave what he received, and nothing more.

### III. THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES, AND RELATIVE IMPORT OF THE MESSAGE.

The report was *good*, because favorable. It was big with promise and prospect to man. The tidings were *new*, and until now, *untold*. It is now, first made known to man. Man never before listened to the heavenly intelligence. The tidings were a proof and pledge of the faithfulness and fidelity of Heaven. They show, that though he tarry long, yet he will come.

The message designates the person of our Deliverer—reveals his character, and announces his birth—its purposes and results. In a word, it is the history of our redemption. It is the great method of our recovery, in plan and issue. It is a narrative of deeds and doings, performed by Heaven, in order that man might live, and live for ever. It is a communication, unutterably more important than any that ever saluted the ears of mortal or celestial being. It was a message infinitely weighty, supremely momentous, and inexpressibly joyful. It was the full and glowing annunciation of an embassy, big and burdened with Heaven's choicest gifts to man. It was the gospel of the grace of God, in brief; to be afterward enlarged upon by the inspiration of Heaven, and the gratitude of man. It embraced the whole range of heavenly benevolence and human virtue. It was the grand bond of recognition between God and man—the link of association between heaven and earth.

### IV THE ADDRESS OF THE MESSAGE.

"Behold I bring *you*;" that is, the "shepherds" in person, and through them, to all mankind. "You"—not man, or



men—not mankind—not Jews or Gentiles, but “*you*” first, and then all your fellows—the partakers of the same ruined nature, the world over and ended—to its last bound, and final hour. What! the children of Adam? Of Abraham? The shepherds of Bethlehem? The poor? The obscure? The unknown? Yes! You—Christ is yours! *Yours*—as your Brother, Kinsman, and Redeemer. He acquires, by his birth, a brother’s right, and a brother’s interest in every human being. He is bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. Human nature is the object of his compassion; and this embraces every human being, even all people. But for you, he had never been born—but for *you*, he had never immortalized Bethlehem by his birth, Judea by his life, Gethsemane by his groans, and rendered sacred for ever the hill of Calvary by his death! *You* create the occasion and furnish the motive. This gives an emphasis to the message, that it otherwise could not have. This writes it upon the heart in lines of light, and in the characters of immortality. This message is as much addressed to one man as to another; and the only difference placed between man and man, on this subject, is in view of the kind of reception given to this message, by those to whom it is addressed.

#### V IT IS MATTER OF GRATITUDE.

Our condition rendered such relief supremely needful. We were fallen, and needed redemption. Blind, stupid, and ignorant, and needed his teaching. Were sinners, and needed his righteousness. Were unholy, and needed to be sanctified. Were ruined in our hopes, and undone in our prospects, and therefore needed a Saviour, “even Christ the Lord.” He who feels not gratitude for this, deserves that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea! Shall all heaven be in a stir about our recovery—shall angels, under

the impulse of sympathetic joy, peal the anthem of redemption, and man alone remain unmoved and unexcited !

Gratitude is compounded of love for the good communicated, affection for the giver, and joy at the reception of good conferred. The good—it is the redemption of the soul from the undying agonies of eternal torture, and its elevation to the thrones and mansions of heaven. The giver is the self-supplied and sourceless Fountain of eternal good. The reception of this grace, is the indemnity of our condition, and the regeneration of our nature, in all the progressive stages of spiritual and eternal life ; and he who does not feel the pulsations of gratitude beat ardent and high, for the riches of this grace, has cancelled the charter of his creation, as a child of God, and claims kindred with the damned !

#### VI. EXTENT AND RANGE OF THE MISSION.

“You, and all people.” If you can find any, beside the “shepherds and all people,” then you have found those who are not interested in the subject ; if not, all mankind are embraced ; and the rainbow of God’s mercy, bending in lucid grandeur o’er the world, offers the warrant and assurance of forgiveness to all. The covenant grant of his promise extends to all—none are precluded. The charter is comprehensive as the arch of heaven, and coëxtensive with the abode and wretchedness of man. It is bounded only by the distant verge of the green earth. It reaches the ulterior bounds of the habitable globe, and leaves no man to be an outcast from the friendship of Heaven, except those who choose to perish in the error of their way, and hazard a wrecked eternity, rather than submit to be saved by grace. The death of Jesus Christ was no provincial transaction. Rectorially, it embraced the great brotherhood of man ; but is implicated with the concerns of a wider dispensation. The history of Jesus Christ furnishes man with a creed, comprehensive as the arch of

heaven, and bounded only by the creation of the living God.

#### VII. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The purpose of God is accomplished—ancient prophecy is fulfilled—the types that prefigured—the symbols that traced—the ceremonies that depicted, and many instituted signs that preintimated his advent—*these* all have their final completion in the birth of Christ. They have assumed their significancy, displayed their correspondence, and given place to the great object of reference in them all.

That Christ has actually appeared, we infer from the fact that, as prophecy had foretold, the sacrifice and oblation have ceased in the Jewish nation. If he is yet to come, how could this prophecy be fulfilled, when the event actually took place, eighteen hundred years ago? Again, Jesus Christ was to be a descendant of David, and of the tribe of Judah; but if he be yet to come, this can never be ascertained, as the tribe of Judah has been long extinct, and the descendants of David utterly unknown. So also, he was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah; but there is no such place now, and probably never will be again. Likewise, he was to appear during the standing of the second temple; but this has been in ruins for eighteen centuries. Hence, we must conclude, that Christ has actually made his appearance.

The incarnation of Christ threw a softening lustre over the awfulness of Godhead. By laying aside, in his humiliation, the glories of a vast monarchy, he placed the majesty of Heaven in a state of fellowship and intercourse with man. Infidels may scoff, but the fact that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, sent forth a feeling of delighted sensibility among the throng of innumerable legions in heaven and earth. His advent was deemed a big and busy enterprise, that was to fill

upon the destinies of past, present, and future millions. He became incarnate for the vindication of God's insulted majesty. He had before him, a great and a toilsome achievement. He came to supersede the slaughtering priest, the flaming altar, and bloody libation. In his life and death, the high attributes of God were put to a severe and delicate test.

#### VIII. HE IS THE SAVIOUR.

Look at the nature, suitableness, and sufficiency of this salvation. It is *from sin*, in all the extent and malignity of its visitations—from sin, in its present and final consequences. It removes the crimes and meets the wants of men. The original curse is intermitted. You enjoy a respite of freedom and improvement—the acceptable year of God—the day of salvation. Christ is provisionally the Saviour of all—especially of the believer. He is the author of redemption to all—the author of eternal redemption to all them that obey him. The remedy exists; to avail ourselves of that remedy, is our duty and interest.

The person of the sinner is saved from condemnation—his understanding from darkness—his mind from unbelief—his heart from impurity, and his life from crime. He is saved from the fear of death, and the ravages of the tomb—from utter and eternal ruin in hell—and finally admitted and promoted to glory, honor and immortality, in the kingdom of God.

Christ exhibits in life, the mute eloquence of a high and holy example. This tends to prepare us for the vicissitudes of earth, and finally for the enjoyment of the raptures of heaven. "Saviour" is the most common and predominant characteristic of our Lord; and it is infinitely needful that we feel our want of him.—To deny this, is to invite the displeasure of Heaven. It is, to assert the sufficiency of our own righteousness; and say, it is good enough for God! It is,

after braving the attribute of Almighty justice, by the commission of crime, to bring it down to the standard of our own polluted obedience. It is, to affirm that the poor, starving samples of virtue, which are current in a world broken loose from communion with God, are meet for his complacency, and challenge his approbation.

#### IX. HE IS "CHRIST THE LORD."

Jehovah, the anointed. This gives certainty and security to the whole. This calls your attention to Jesus Christ, as God and man—as Mediator, Advocate, Ruler, and Judge. It was requisite we should know in whom we trust. No inferior—no incompetent being is our Deliverer. He becomes illustrious in the Scriptures, from the ascription to him of every conceivable perfection. His titles proclaim him God—his perfections, his works, his relations, and all the miscellaneous matter relating to him in the Sacred Scriptures. Here, we learn what Jesus Christ is in himself; and what, in relation to us. He is Jehovah anointed—the Jehovah envoy, on an errand of recovery to our fallen and wretched world. His nod can resolve the universe into its primitive elements. He controls it in the entire progress of its destiny. All the stupendous certainties of the eternal world, are exclusively referable to his will. Whether you live in heaven, or wail in hell, it is his complacency or displeasure, that gives birth to your joy or sorrow.

#### X. THE CONFIRMATION, THEME, AND CELEBRATION.

The attestation of the "shepherds." "A multitude of the heavenly host" confirm the truth, and give currency to the tidings. They rejoice at the birth of the Son of God; because interested in the great question of man's happiness. They saw that happiness going into effect, under his intended administration. They were not only present, but in hymns

of lofty devotion, they hailed the heart-reviving dawn of better days and fairer hopes.

The phenomena of the Eastern magi—the completion of prophecy, in the actual presence of Christ on earth—the announcement of the angel to Mary—to Joseph—to Zechariah and Elizabeth—the testimony of the inspired Simeon and the sainted Anna—the prevailing expectation of a Deliverer, over the world—an expectation that has never since existed, but in reference to which, the world has sunk into a deathlike sleep—*these*, all these circumstances, with a convincing accumulation of testimony, confirm the truth of the message, and the validity of the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship.

Universal nature seemed to feel a gladdening impulse.—

“Hark! a glad voice, the lonely desert cheers,  
Prepare the way, a God! a God appears!  
A God! a God! the vocal hills reply,  
The rocks proclaim th’ approaching Deity!”

Indeed, a most mysterious synchronism of events occurred at this time, to place the birth of our Lord beyond all dispute. Heaven and earth united, and published the important truth with miraculous organs.

*The theme.*—“On earth peace.”—Peace with God—peace of conscience—peace between man and man, the world over. Its dominion is universal, and its triumph final. This peace results from the good-will and benevolence of the Deity.—This is the source and spring of all.

*“Good-will.”*—God is kind—is good—is well-disposed—is reconciled. He looks upon his new creation, and sees it “very good.” All disorder is expelled the Divine kingdom. Sickness and sorrow, pain and death give place to the universal diffusion of the “latter-day glory.” The sword of persecution, the bloody instruments of war, and misfortune’s gory scythe, no longer drip with human blood—the tongue is no longer armed with “the poison of asps,” or dipped in the

gall of the damned ! Peace and good-will existed in Paradise, when there were no evils to deplore, and shall be perpetuated in heaven, where God is all and in all.

*The celebration.*—"Glory to God in the highest" "Glory to God on trembling paths of wavy ether ran—from heaven's blue concave, the unrolling glory spread its fold !" "Glory"—thanksgiving and praise to God, who **has** sent, in the likeness of sinful flesh, his Son. It implies a perceptible manifestation of the Divine character and excellences ; and corresponding conceptions and emotions, on the part of those who are favored with such displays of the nature and perfections of Jehovah, together with a lively expression of them.

In conclusion, our subject affords, inferentially, the most encouraging promise, that the hymn of Bethlehem shall everywhere be sung—the temples of devotion shall everywhere adorn the hill and the vale, and their spires light up the heavens with increasing splendor !—When Asia shall take up the anthem of "life from the dead"—when the golden glories of Christian freedom shall gild the desolate sands of Africa—Europe hail the heaven-descending dawn ; and the shores of the Western world reply, "Glory to God in the highest"—and earth, in all her various divisions, shall be prepared for her reädmision into the great family of high and adoring worlds ! Then the sword and the spear shall never again be seen red—flaming through the death-strewn fields—the earth shall not be fattened with the corpses, nor whitened with the bones of men—the tempests and struggles of six thousand years shall be hushed to silence, and God's creation sigh no more !

## SERMON VI.

## CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL CHARACTER.

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”—LUKE xxiv. 44–48.

IN attending to the subject before us, we propose the following particulars:—

1. *The testimony of God, alluded to in the text, on the subject of the humiliation, sufferings, and exaltation of his Son.*
2. *The necessity of Christ's sufferings and triumph, in order to man's salvation, and the vindication of the Divine honor.*
3. *The nature of Christ's death, viewed as a means of life, and the price of the world's redemption.*
4. *Its effect—immediate, continued, and for ever.*

I. *The TESTIMONY of God alluded to in the text, concerning his Son.*

The definite references made in the Scriptures—“the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms,” to Christ, are



numerous and striking. Upon these, we will not dwell or speak at large, but merely submit a brief citation. Look, then, at these predictions.—He is spoken of as the “seed of the woman”—of Abraham—the promise is renewed to Isaac and Jacob.—See the offering of Cain and Abel.—He is the “Shiloh.”—The “Prophet” resembling Moses.—As our “Passover, a bone of him was not to be broken.”—A “Star in Jacob.”—A “Sceptre in Israel.” In Job, he is the “Redeemer”—a “Ransom”—“One of a thousand”—“Days-man.”—In Psalms, he is “King in Zion”—his “soul, not left in hell, does not see corruption”—he is “buffeted, smitten,” spit upon, receives the vinegar and the gall—~~dies~~, and rises as the ascending God, and King of glory. He is there a “King, and Priest” also, “after the order of Melchisedek.” In Proverbs, “his delights are with the sons of men”—he is “the poor man delivering the city”—“what is his name, and what his Son’s name?”—Enoch prophesied of him.—See the promise to Abraham, 1920 years before the birth of Christ.—Jacob’s prayer to Christ,—“The angel that redeemed me from all evil,”—“I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah,” (in reference to Christ.) In Isaiah, he is “Immanuel—God with us”—the “Child born, the Son given—a Prince—a King”—the suffering Messiah—the exalted sovereign—the “Ruler of his people.” In Ezekiel, he is the “good Shepherd”—the “Plant of renown.” In Jeremiah, he is “Jehovah our Righteousness.” In Daniel, “the Prince. Messiah cut off”—“the Son of man”—“the Judge of all the earth,” worshipped by all nations—he is to “make reconciliation for iniquity,” and die at the end of “seventy weeks.” In Hosea, he is the “Restorer of Israel”—the Son of God from Egypt—is to rise the third day. In Micah, he is “born in Bethlehem”—is “Ruler in Israel”—is the “eternal God.” In Haggai, he is “the Desire of all nations.” In Zechariah, he is “the Branch”—speaks “peace to the heathen”—is

"Jehovah pierced." In Malachi, he is "the Angel of the covenant"—"Jehovah of the temple"—the "Sun of righteousness," rising on the nations. In the history of Jonah, his resurrection is typically predicted.

The appearances of Deity under the Old dispensation, seem to be so many phases of the future incarnation of the Son of God; all being made in his person, temporarily assuming that form in which he was afterward to appear, substantially, in the day of his manifestation. All these passages have obvious reference to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, together with its purposes and results. All these predictions meet with their completion and confirmation, in the history of Jesus Christ; and the whole demonstrates the Divine inspiration, and corresponding authority of the Jewish Scriptures.—Thus, emphatically, "it is written," by the finger of the living God, in his message to man.

II. *The NECESSITY of Christ's sufferings and triumph, in order to man's salvation, and the vindication of the Divine honor.*

1. This we argue, first, from the purposes and plans of the Deity. All the intercourse that Deity has had with man, since death entered our world on account of sin, and was entailed upon all its generations, shows that God would, and could have nothing to do with man, except through a Mediator. It was contrary to his plan; and did not comport with his purposes; and whatever Deity does, is the accomplishment of his previous, preëxisting purposes. Hence, arises the necessity under consideration.

2. Next, we argue this necessity, from man's defection. The law of God was frowning in all the wrath of violated dignity. Man owed to Heaven, a debt of obedience that he could not pay; for he had renounced his allegiance, and thrown himself off into exile from his Maker. He had

renounced all the resources giving him the disposition and the ability to obey. He owed to Heaven also the debt of criminal responsibility; and he could not remove the offence that created that responsibility. Man owed his only hope to mercy; and this could only be exercised, in the event that the law be "magnified and made honorable." Hence, the necessity of a Mediator.

3. Again, we argue this necessity, from the institution of animal sacrifice. We infer the practice and precept to be of equal age. The date of the institution is coeval with that state of things, which rendered the event it signified necessary. The Divine origin and appointment of animal sacrifice, may be argued from its nature—from the language of Scripture—from the many instances of the visible attestation of the Divine pleasure—from the offerings of Adam, Abel, Noah, and the father of Sampson—the case of Job and his friends—its revival in the family of Noah—its existence in the Horeb covenant—from its design—from the earliness of its date—and from its exclusive prevalence; it being the only kind of sacrifice that prevailed, until the giving of the law; except that of Cain, and it was rejected.

4. We found an argument for this necessity, upon the good sense of mankind. It has been the opinion of all ages and nations, that atonement, of some kind, was necessary to remove the displeasure of the Deity.

5. We appeal, for the establishment of this necessity for Christ's sufferings, to the direct, and explicit declarations of Scripture. "If righteousness come by the law, then *Christ is dead in vain!*" If, by deeds of piety, without atonement and sacrifice, men can get to heaven, Christ's visit to our world, is utterly nugatory and fruitless.—"*Without the shedding of blood, there was no remission.*"—"A *body hast thou prepared me.*"—"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons

unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect *through sufferings*."—"We preach *Christ crucified*."—"Faith in *his blood*."—"He is the *propitiation* for our sins."—"To declare his *righteousness* for the *remission of sins* that are past."

6. We argue this necessity, from miscellaneous considerations, arising out of the history of the Old and New dispensations.

If it had not been necessary, would Heaven have suffered it? Has the Almighty been at an unnecessary expenditure of labor and pains? Must not weighty and essential causes exist, for all the movements and operations of Heaven? If the death of Christ had not been necessary, how could the fact be reconciled with the justice of the Deity? Since he was without sin, his suffering, upon the supposition that it was not necessary, would amount to an impeachment of the Divine conduct, in permitting his death of unparalleled torture and degradation.

7. This necessity is further argued, from the truth and faithfulness of God, in relation to the condition of his covenant, and the immutability of his purposes.

God had said it. It formed a part of the declared will of Heaven. God could not lie—the Scriptures could not be broken; and hence, after that Christ had engaged to recover man, and this had been announced to the world, on the faithful page of Scripture testimony, it behooved Christ to suffer, in order to redeem the pledge he had given to mankind, on the subject of his sufferings.

III. *The NATURE of the death of Christ, viewed as a means of life, and the price of the world's redemption.*

The death of Christ was *vicarious*. It was a propitiation for our sins—it was expiatory. In all legal interpretation, it was in our room and stead. He occupied our place, in meet-

ing as our surety, the demands the law had against us. *His* death prevented *ours*. The necessity of *ours*, is superseded by *his*. Hence, *his* was evidently in the place of *ours*. We have no reason to believe that God would have accepted the sinner at all, without atonement. An atonement that *has* been accepted in the stead of the sinner, was made by the death of Christ. Hence, his death, both in point of fact and consequence, was *in the place of ours*.—It was “*for*”—in the place of—considered as—*for the sake of*—in exchange for—instead of—because of—to serve in the place of. (*Walker*.)

The fair construction, therefore, of the sacred volume is, that *Christ's* death was to prevent *ours*; and that *his* was accepted in the place of *ours*. Justice had an operation upon the person of our Redeemer, and met with a display in his death, equivalent to what would have taken place in our own case, but for the interposition of Christ. If this be not so, then the incautious penmen of the Bible have forfeited their claims to inspiration and common sense, by the use of improper and contradictory language!

Look at the following language of Scripture—“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd”—“The day of vengeance is in my heart”—“The day of vengeance of our God”—“My fury, it upheld me”—“Stricken, smitten of God”—“It pleased the Lord to bruise him”—“Our iniquities were laid upon him”—“He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed”—“He was oppressed—he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter”—“He was taken from prison and from judgment”—Jehovah “made his soul an offering for sin”—he “trod the wine-press alone”—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—“The cup that could not pass from him.” All these passages demonstrate the vicarious, and expiatory character of the death of Christ.

The death of Christ was expiatory both in plan and issue.

His life was given, "a ransom for many." He himself "bore our sins in his body on the tree." He died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." That is, he bore the legal consequences of our sins—the punishment due to them. The transfer, as a governmental act—as an administrative measure, is expressly named and recognized in Scripture. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*." "By his stripes we are healed." Hence, the important Scripture doctrine of substitution—of vicarious atonement.

If needful, we might introduce a criticism, upon the most ordinary language of the Scripture, and prove what we affirm. The preposition *for*, in the original and our language, frequently means and carries in it, the force of satisfaction. Xenophon, Plato, and others, frequently use it in this sense. And they use it to show that one man's life was substituted in the room of another, as Raphelius has clearly shown. "Would God I had died for thee." Joseph said, "I am in the place of God." This was not true in nature, but in law and destiny. It issued in the prevention of *our* death. It removed the necessity that otherwise existed for *ours*. His was accepted in the place of *ours*. But for his death, inquisition would have been made for the blood of every offender. In a word, without the death of Christ, there would have been a hell for all, and a heaven for none. If, therefore, according to the Scriptures, Christ did not die in our room and stead, the author of the Bible has played off a farce, in the deception of all to whom the gospel comes!

Expiate means to annul the guilt of a crime, by whatever means. It will be objected, however, that if the death of Christ was the result of Divine purpose, the Jews were not to blame. This does not follow, by any means. God saw what the voluntary perversity of their disposition, would lead them to perpetrate; and as he had no agency in producing that disposition, he would not coerce its restraint. The conduct

of our Lord's crucifiers, was unconstrained and avoidable, in view of the first great principles of human action. But infinite Wisdom, foreseeing their conduct, without determining it, declared it to the world. The *death* of Jesus Christ was predetermined and ordained; and it was matter of necessity. But all the declarations of Scripture with regard to the *mode* of his death by crucifixion, are to be resolved into God's purpose, in view of what he saw man would do, and not in view of what he compelled him to do. This view of the subject will vindicate the Divine conduct, demonstrate the spontaneity of human action, and throw that guilt upon the Jews, with which they stand charged by Peter, Stephen, and Paul, as well as others of the sacred penmen.

Reconciliation, atonement, propitiation, and pacification, are words synonymous in their meaning. This will evidently appear from the following language of Scripture—"Reconciliation for iniquity—for the sins of the people"—"To make reconciliation upon the altar for all Israel"—"By whom we have received the atonement"—"I have found a ransom"—"Reconciliation in things pertaining to God"—"Peace with God"—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—"Well pleased for his righteousness' sake." That is, the sufferings and obedience of Christ. With Christ, he *was* never displeased; therefore, this pleasure was in relation to *man*, for Christ's sake. "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." The expiation of sin is literally to remove the curse appended to its commission. It is to waive, or intermit the claims of Heaven, in charge against us. "Wherewith should he reconcile himself to his Master?" That is, how remove his Master's displeasure? "A Mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." *One party* in the reconciliation. "God *was* in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." The reason assigned here for the

non-imputation of guilt, is the fact that God was *in Christ*, in relation to man, already. The obstacles in the way of man's recovery, on the part of God, were removed; and being himself reconciled, he was engaged in reconciling the world. Guilt was not imputed, because Christ had atoned for, and removed the original offence, by meeting and abrogating the claims of justice. "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." That is, by satisfying the claims of justice. He cancelled the debt, by its payment. He released the debtor, by discharging his obligation. The nature of reconciliation is clearly shown, from a passage in our Lord's sermon on the Mount. "Go and be reconciled to thy brother." This direction is given to the offending party. This must be done, by acceding to terms that will support the claims of the offended party.

"Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ"—  
 "Peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus"—"And having made peace by the blood of his cross"—"Prince of peace"—"This man shall be the peace"—"The covenant of peace shall be between them"—that is, Father and Son. "The covenant of my peace,"—and many other passages, all teaching the same doctrine of reconciliation to God, through the atonement of Christ.

We may illustrate this doctrine in the following manner. Let A and B be cities. We will suppose the *love* of God directed to A and its inhabitants, and his *hatred* to B and its inhabitants; and corresponding treatment is extended to both, in view of their moral condition. God, who is immutable, can never become reconciled to B and its inhabitants, while they continue what they are, and where they are. But the inhabitants of B are required to remove to A, (provision having been made for this removal,) if they would become the objects of God's love. They remove to A, and the same conduct is shown them after this, that was before shown to the inhabit-



ants of A. Here then, we see a change of relation, and a change of conduct on the part of God; and yet, this does not affect his immutability in the least. God, however, had declared his determination to punish B and its inhabitants, whenever the measure of their iniquity required it, in order to the good of his government. A third person, however, interposing in behalf of B and its inhabitants, proposing to secure the great ends of government, in the removal of the inhabitants of B to A; this interference is accepted, and the controversy is adjusted. God now loves in A, the people he hated in B. The essential change was in the inhabitants of B; but a relative change—a change in law, government, and conduct, has taken place in God; and the whole is the result of the mediation of a third person. This idea we transfer to the doctrine of atonement.

The doctrine of atonement does not affect the Divine immutability, any more than prayer and deeds of piety. If the doctrine of atonement militates against the Divine immutability, in the same way, will many facts recorded in Scripture. Upon the intercession of Abraham, God pardoned Abimelech; upon that of Moses, the children of Israel; upon that of Job, his three friends.

Thus it appears, that Christ Jesus, in dying *for* us, died to meet the necessity that demanded we should die. He not only took *our* place, but removed us to a more eligible one. He stood as our surety in the place of the unjust; and the result was, we were brought to God.

The confirmation of all this, is his resurrection. This proved the truth of his religion, and substantiated his claims, as our Ruler and Judge. It removed the obloquies of his cross, and asserted the efficacy and completion of his atonement and satisfaction. It exhibits him as engaged in those transactions, that comport with the grandeur and glory of his mission. It furnishes evidence of his elevation, to that rule, investiture,

and sovereignty, which rightfully belong to him, as King of kings, and Lord of lords. And it renders certain and infallible, the prospect of our own resurrection.

#### IV THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

Deity being propitiated and reconciled, we are admitted into favor with him—our return to his fellowship is allowed—is solicited. But it is alleged, that this doctrine will militate against the doctrine of the Divine immutability. We contend, however, that it does not imply a change of nature, but only a change of relation. But for some consideration, other than what man could render, Divine justice had proceeded against us. That consideration, however, existed in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. And hence, we are spared as offenders; inasmuch as our cause was undertaken by one who was “mighty to save.” If therefore, we should fail to trace with the finger of human science, the connection between the cross of Christ and human redemption, we are bound, nevertheless, to believe it, because God has revealed it. Christ conciliated the pardon of sin, with infinite purity. Mercy was placed in arrest of justice. He cleared the way of access to a guilty world; and provided for the publication of a full and free salvation to all.

This state of things still continues. The way to heaven is open and plain. The throne of grace here, and the throne of God hereafter, are accessible to all the faithful. Add to this, the myriads that have been reclaimed from sin, and finally redeemed from the earth—also the great work of salvation now going on in the world, in all its grand and less considerable divisions—the Bible, the ministry, and all the means of grace—in a word, the existing administration of the Redeemer, is the effect of his death.

Finally, it shall issue in the recovery of all the faithful. It shall conduct all the redeemed to the great Sabbath of eter-

nity, that is never to be succeeded by a week of toil. Heaven shall redeem the pilgrims, earth essayed to detain in vain. The road to hell shall be left waste and untrodden—comparative desolation shall be carried to the local regions of the damned. Thrones shall be planted upon every foot of ground in heaven, and happy and immortal beings shall be set upon them, to live and sing for ever!

How will this be accomplished?—By preaching “repentance and remission of sins, in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

“*Repentance.*”—You must see and regret your sins. You must renounce them, and with the vows of amendment upon you, go to God, resolving to devote yourselves to his service for ever, or die martyrs in the attempt.

“*Remission of sins.*”—Your various guilt must be cancelled, and you must be accepted in Jesus Christ.

“*Preached.*”—Fearlessly and faithfully declared in the hearing of the nations.

“*In his name.*”—It is *this* gives force and effectiveness to preaching, and tone and energy to the ministrations of the pulpit.

“*Among all nations.*”—Everywhere, in all the world.

Now, a tide of splendor is poured over the attributes of the Deity. We no longer hear the thundering voice of God from the flaming top of Sinai, scattering dismay among the thousands of Israel! The favor of Heaven—what tears and money could not buy—on this hinges our destiny. Without this doctrine, sermons are high-sounding cymbals, and churches and pulpits are mere architecture! The security of Heaven's throne is sustained! Jesus Christ, the victim who bled a full expiation—we would wave the banner of his cross over the fall of Adam and the loss of Eden, and all is repaired! This alone is the great indefeasible seal of man's salvation. We would plant the standard of the cross upon the wrecks of

idols and ruins of empires! It casts the whole scene of earthly grandeur behind, like a shifting panorama! It proclaims the *new-year-day* of the world's redemption! Under the influence of this atoning mercy, the soul is peopled with new thoughts and new affections, and lives in rapt communion with the throne of God, light is reflected from a world to come; and we see in the subjects of this salvation, miracles of faith and fortitude that throw a gleam of triumph over the horrors of martyrdom!

"*Jerusalem.*"—Here, tarry until you are ready, and then start. Here, the impulse is given; the career is begun. Here, the stone is cast, that shall form an ever-widening circle, until earth is moved to her utmost bounds. Here, commences that river that is to roll on in strong and unwasting current, until it shall fertilize the veriest wilds of heathenism, in every land and nation. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."—"There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness."—"Waters shall break out from Jerusalem."—"Beginning at Jerusalem."—And then extending the sphere of operation, wide as the family of Adam, and perennial as the years of time!

In conclusion, we trace the effect of Christ's death, in the salvation of incalculable millions, into the expanded range of heaven's wide circumference, where the powers of earthly conception fail, and archangelic minds grow dizzy with delight! When the Son of God, surveying the infinitely extended ranks of his chosen, inquires, "What are these, and whence came they?" Anon, from a thousand eminences in heaven, the angelic ministers of grace that waited on the heirs of salvation beneath, exclaim, "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" when lo! in gladdening response and mingling measure, the millions of

the redeemed—numbers without number, with harps, and trumps, and songs, and shouts, raise the unending jubilee of their joys,—the immeasurable chorus of eternity,—“Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” God grant that you and I may be there !

## SERMON VII.

## THE TRUTH OF RELIGION

“And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book.”—  
ISA. xxix. 18.

IT is a distinguishing attribute of the Christian religion, and one that presses it home upon the acceptance of every intelligent being, that it is not only susceptible of fair, and unquestionable demonstration, but it is made a part of our religious duty, as Christians, to furnish such demonstration to those whose ignorance or unbelief calls for it. Efforts of this kind are entitled to no credit, with those whose piety is made up of unthinking credulity, and blind superstition. But all who glory in a reasonable hope of immortality, will hold them as they should be held, in high appreciation. The Bible contains the first elements of our religion; we should, therefore, make ourselves acquainted with the evidences by which it is supported.

In order to belief in any document, purporting to be a communication from God to his creatures, it is necessary that the nature, and subject-matter of such communication, be definite and intelligible. The practicability of such communication, in some consistent way, must also be indubitable. It must appear, moreover, that such a communication is *necessary*,—that it will not be repugnant to, or derogate from the Divine glory; and likewise, that the nature and fitness of things, render such a communication *probable*. It will be necessary,

moreover, that we be able to identify, by some distinguishing characteristics, and the most infallible criteria, the alleged communication. Such communication, further, must be consistent with the character of God, and condition of man. It must bear the impression of the hand of God, in all its distinguishing parts, and more prominent features. It must be accompanied by external evidence, abundant and irrefutable. And finally, must furnish an exemplification of its truth and importance, in its range and operation among men.

It only remains for us to illustrate these remarks, and apply them to the subject of revealed religion, as furnished us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The prophecy from which our text is taken, involves expressly the subject and system of revealed religion; and to this exclusive topic of discussion in the text, we invite attention, hoping there will not be an inattentive ear, or uninterested heart, while we enlarge upon a theme so sublime and impressive.

Unless the nature of revelation can be clearly ascertained—its practicability obviously shown—its necessity forcibly demonstrated—its tendency to promote the glory of God and good of man, fairly evinced—its probability in the nature and fitness of things, high and commanding—unless its claims are supported by demonstrative argument—its consistency with the Divine character and human condition, decidedly shown—unless it bear the manifest impression of the Deity, in outline and detail—be supported by the visible and undoubted attestation of Heaven—and finally, prove itself worthy the reception and confidence of man, by its well-known and obvious effects—unless revealed religion bear *these* marks, we may, with consistency, be allowed to turn theists; and know devotion only in the great temple of nature' But if, on the other hand, the data we have proposed, meet with a clear and triumphant substantiation in the Christian scheme, we must either be Christians, or enrol ourselves among the

children of folly, who either never think at all, or think to no purpose.

1. We commence by inquiring, What is revealed religion? We answer, It is the will and mind of God revealed to man.—It is a system of religious truth furnished us by God himself.—It is the recorded history of an actual communication from God to his creatures.—It is a knowledge of God and the gospel, by means of a kind and degree of intelligence, at which we never could arrive by unassisted reason.—It is man furnished with the great truths of the Bible, by the special inspiration of the Almighty.—It is a supernatural discovery, on the part of man, of God and the things of God.—It is God suggesting to the human mind, the great truths of religion—truths at the knowledge of which, we never could arrive, but for the aid of Heaven, interposed as above.

2. *The possibility of revelation.*

Man has capacity to receive it, and God has power to give it: and yet, without the rejection of *one* of these propositions, the possibility of a revelation from God, cannot be denied. To deny the *first*, would be foolish—to deny the *second*, would be blasphemous. Revelation is the will of God concerning man, and therefore, must be possible, in relation to man. For the knowledge of whatever is binding on man, in the light of obligation, must be possible to man; and yet the Divine will, is confessedly obligatory on all men, and therefore, a revelation of the will of God to man is possible.

God *can* communicate his will to man, without doing violence to his own nature. Man under the influence of the Holy Spirit, *can* receive such communication, without any violence to his nature; hence, the possibility of a revelation from God to man.

3. *The necessity of revelation.*

The inability of human reason to form an adequate system of virtue and happiness, enforced by proper sanctions, and



urged by prevalent considerations, strongly argues the necessity of a revelation from Heaven. Also, the condition of man as a sinner, which renders the revealments of natural law insufficient to the purposes of his salvation. This necessity relates both to the principles of faith, and the rules of morality; natural law definitely prescribing neither for the sinner. Not saying that salvation is impossible without revelation, we remark that it must be extremely difficult. We are assured, that without the range and efficacy of the covenant of grace, there is no salvation. And what is revelation, but a history of the covenant of redemption!

4. In all ages of the world, those who have possessed the strongest powers of mind, have, in the imbecility of their own reason, in the apprehension of religious truth and moral obligation, discovered the necessity of a revelation from God. This imbecility of our nature admits of positive proof from the history of mankind in all ages. An adequate system of religious and moral truth never has been formed. The reason is obvious—the natural and unassisted powers of man have had a sufficient trial—a trial of about four thousand years; and this trial too, made by about nineteen twentieths of the aggregate population of the world. The reason is, the manifest inability of our nature to acquire a competent knowledge of God and religion.

5. In the heathen world, none could boast of exalted genius and cultivated intellect more than Greece and Rome; and yet, their greatest philosophers were not able to form a consistent system of morality and religion. Even those who elevated themselves to eminence by the study of nature, were nevertheless, surrounded by mists and clouds of moral darkness, that nothing but revelation could dissipate; and these, it is possible, borrowed their light from revelation. A pretty extensive knowledge of the principal doctrines of revelation, must have existed in the family of Noah, subsequently to the

deluge ; and from that source, might have been handed down by tradition, in the order of successive generations, to the days of these philosophers. Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher, appeared always to think there was somewhere in the world, a better religion or philosophy than his own, and used frequently to say, it was "in the West." Zoroaster, the celebrated Persian philosopher, contemporary with Confucius, as he was among the captive Jews in Babylon, got, in all probability, his sublime morality, the best in the heathen world, from the law of Moses. And indeed, leaving the *written* law out of the question, it is fairly to be supposed, that the law of God, as written upon the heart, was the true source of all the warrantable morality in the heathen world. But even with the best of those philosophers, morality was grossly perverted. Epictetus recommended dishonesty—Pythagoras forbade prayer—Aristotle urged revenge, as a duty—Cicero advocated murder and suicide—Brutus, Cato, Cassius and Seneca, contended for self-destruction—Plato, Socrates, and Seneca, were common swearers—Aristotle and Socrates both denounced chastity as weakness ; and so of the whole catalogue of their infamous notions and crimes.

6. In the present disordered state of things, a revelation from God is as necessary, to an understanding of the principles of natural law, as those of revealed religion ; and *when* correctly understood, natural law cannot save us, as sinners ; hence, the necessity of a revelation. God has revealed himself to man in three ways—by action, impression, and language ; and it is most likely that all the light of nature, so called, is the result of one or all these methods of revelation.

7. Revelation is not derogatory to the character of God. Any thing not repugnant to the attributes of Deity, cannot derogate from his glory, for the glory of God is the resplendent lustre of his perfections. Revelation, in order to be opposed to the perfections of Jehovah, must contain in it some-

thing of the nature of evil; but coming from God (the very thing supposed) this cannot be; hence, revelation cannot be inconsistent with the perfections of Deity. It cannot derogate from the character of God to promote the happiness of his creatures; and if so revelation cannot be derogatory to the character of Deity.

God is good, and *can* consistently reveal himself to his creatures—man stands in need of such revelation, and is capable of receiving it—it would not detract from the Divine glory; hence, it is probable God would reveal himself to man. We proceed to show that he has done so; and we think we are prepared to meet all the demands of unbelief itself upon this subject. What would infidelity demand, in order to believe in a document purporting to be a revelation from Heaven? It would, no doubt, proudly require the following indubitable criteria.—*First*, a revelation from Heaven cannot contain any thing contrary to the Divine nature. *Secondly*, it must exhibit the impression of His hand, in its greatness, goodness, and perfection, in all its parts. *Thirdly*, it should be attested with external, positive, incontestable evidence, addressed to the senses of mankind. *Fourthly*, there should be some method by which the positive, incontestable evidence of its truth and Divine origin, might be handed down to posterity, without the possibility of deception. All these rules apply, as tests, to the Bible; demonstrating beyond the possibility of doubt, that it is a revelation from God. So, the infidel has what he asked for, in the outset.

Taking the high, *à priori* road in reasoning, what indisputable data of the Deity have we, that are contradicted by revelation? Not a solitary principle. The manifestations of nature are duly accredited—so far as they go, they are not negatived by revelation. The grandeur of Christianity is beyond conception—its goodness overpowers our gratitude; and its perfection renders it a most splendid exhibition of the

Deity. The miraculous facts of the gospel were matters of as much notoriety, as any events in the records of antiquity, and as well attested. The glory of Babylon—the conquests of Alexander—the empire of the Cæsars, are not better established, or more variously attested. The original evidence of the truth of Christianity, has come down to us with a variety of matter, a boldness of point, and an accumulation of force and credibility, that cannot be claimed by any document of equal age. The Annals of Tacitus, Suetonius's Life of Tiberius, the Chronicles of Phlegon, are none of them half as well, or half as copiously attested, as the historical portions of the Bible.

*Christianity is consistent with the character of God, and condition of man, in all its doctrines and duties.*

Our knowledge of God, independently of revelation, is extremely limited; but what we do know of him, is not inconsistent with the character given him in the Scriptures. All must agree, that moral evil is the result of abused agency—is the avoidable abuse of good, on the part of man. The Incarnation is not contrary to reason. To this, it is objected, that the redemption of the world was too long deferred, to admit the idea, that the doctrine is of God. But it was revealed to the first pair, and sensibly memorialized by the appointment of God himself, until the death of Christ took place. Had it taken place immediately after the apostasy of Adam and Eve, the evil of sin, shown only by the circumstance of a single aberration from original law, would not, in the estimation of posterity, have justified the magnitude and grandeur of the remedy. But during the progress of four thousand years, the multiplied crimes, and degraded condition of man, called for even the death of the Son of God, as the only sovereign remedy. If Christ had died immediately after the fall, the history of man's redemption would have had a place so remote, and, of necessity, obscure, in the records of

antiquity, that faith would have been next thing to impossible, in any document that might have reached us, at least, upon the ground occupied by infidels in this controversy; for they allege, that the history of redemption is, even *now*, too remote for belief. If Christ had died after a stay upon earth equal to that asserted of him in the New Testament, in the first ages of the world, such would have been the ignorance and barbarity of the people, that infidelity, in succeeding ages, would have pleaded *that* ignorance and barbarity, in bar to the reception and belief of the Christian religion.

Christ appeared on earth and died, at a time when learning and the fine arts were at their zenith; and the place of his appearance was Judea, then the centre of the civilized world. It was at the junction of two continents—Asia and Africa, and almost in sight of Europe—the only known continents of the earth at that time. And when his ministers preached the miraculous story of his resurrection, they did it at Jerusalem, where he rose from the dead; and instead of seeking a barbarous and uncultivated people, they carried the tidings of their crucified and risen Master into the centre of victorious Greece and triumphant Rome.

It is urged, however, that *all* do not share the advantages of redemption. We allege, *all do*, more or less;—but the objection holds equally against nature and providence. Suppose, in reply, I were to allege that the sun is **not** necessary at all to the natural world, because it does not shine everywhere! Some are blind, and cannot see it. Some deaf as well as blind, and therefore, have no idea of it. Or, I will urge that rain is not by any means useful or necessary, because it does not fall at those times, and in those places, **where** and **when** it is most wanting! Suppose I say, bread is not necessary, for some starve to death for the want of it; or that fire and water are not valuable, for many lose their lives by them!

Christianity bears the impress of the hand of God; *first*,

in its *perspicuity*; *secondly*, in its *consistency*; *thirdly*, in its *proportion*; *fourthly*, in its *sublimity*; *fifthly*, in its *holiness*; *sixthly*, in its *energy*—the propriety of its conditions—the promise of Divine aid or providence.

All is perspicuously plain and forcible, finding its way to the conscience, and intelligibly addressing the understanding. The sublimity of the Scriptures is equally striking. The whole, “sublime as the flame from the disparting cloud, and awfully majestic, as the voice of thunder that shakes the shuddering world.” Its consistency—each part agreeing with the other, and connectively forming a general whole. Its holiness—its holy and spiritual requirements. Its proportion, or the peculiar adaptation of all its claims and obligations to the moral condition of man. Its energy—strikingly efficient, and singularly efficacious. The propriety of its conditions, is significantly indicative of the infinite wisdom of God employed in the formation of the system. All the conditions of the gospel are reasonable in themselves; and appear to rise out of the relations existing between man and his Maker. They are, besides, practicable—for moral aid is always extended to us, to “help our infirmity,” in the performance of duty. Every needful succor is promised and afforded. Christianity shows us what providence is in itself; and what it is in relation to man; and in all this, we see the merciful impression of the hand of God.

The truth of revelation is identified with facts alleged in its support. And if these facts cannot be proved, Christianity is a dream—the plaything of human credulity and superstition. If, however, these facts admit of proof, then the oracles of unbelief are struck dumb, and the lips of hell are sealed in silence! I would instance a few: the miracles of Paradise—those of the flood—the exodus of Israel—and those connected with the ministry of Jesus Christ—the institution of animal sacrifice. The disorders of the moral world, and

the concurrent testimony of all nations, demonstrate the *first*. The disorders of the natural world—the uniform suffrage of every nation and generation, from the debarkation of Noah to the present hour, prove the *second*—not to mention the fact of God's having placed his bow in the heavens; for, with all due deference to Sir Isaac Newton and others, I *must* look upon this, as a supernatural transaction. Otherwise, the language of God is void of significance and meaning. If the bow be natural, and had always been there, it could be no symbol of assurance to man—it was seen before, and could not be looked upon, as other than natural and necessary; and, therefore, could not possibly be looked upon, as ground of hope or confidence. If it be said, God's word is sufficient,—I consent, but why any sign, unless supernatural, and so affording ground of trust? I admit the modern philosophy of the rainbow, but deny its preëxistence. Query. If natural, would not other similar appearances be seen in the heavens?

The reality of the miracles of the flood, is demonstrated by the curse-disfigured face of the globe—by the Alps and Apennines—by the Andes and Pyrenees—by Atlas and the mountains of Taurus—and by every mountain of every region, from Japan to Mexico; where the relics of the ocean have been heaved to the summits of the mountains, *thousands* of feet above the level of the sea! But we are principally concerned with the miracles of Moses and of Jesus Christ. The one in confirmation of the Jewish, the other, of the Christian revelation.

#### THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

On this subject, the God of nature and grace, has furnished us with two kinds of evidence, drawn from a great variety of sources. The *first* class is in support of the *Facts*; the *second*, in support of the *Doctrines* of revelation. These, respectively, will claim our attention.

In support of the FACTS recorded in the history of our redemption, we propose the following rules of examination, and method of proof. Of the facts of revelation with which we are at present concerned, we affirm, *first*, that they were addressed to the outward senses of mankind. *Secondly*, they took place publicly, and in the presence of witnesses. *Thirdly*, public monuments and actions, have been kept up ever since, in memory of them. *Fourthly*, such monuments and actions were established, and commenced, at the time the facts took place. *Fifthly*, we have a book that is the Bible, in which is a record of these facts, written at the time, and containing the laws, civil and ecclesiastical, of the people to whom this Book belongs, and before whom these facts originally took place. *Sixthly*, some of these facts were previously announced, by a long train of prophecies. *Seventhly*, in applying the rule to the fact of Christ's advent, it was prefigured by types, both of a circumstantial and personal nature, from the earliest ages of the world. *Finally*, we allege that these facts are such, that their relators and witnesses could not be deceived, without supposing a universal deception of the senses of mankind.

The foregoing remarks, in the character of *infallible criteria*, apply to the miracles, both of the Old and New dispensations—to those of Moses, and those of Jesus Christ and his apostles. The latter performed in the presence of thousands, and the former before hundreds of thousands! Monuments, such particularly as the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper.—Every thing that has contributed, either to the authentication or publication of Christianity, not essential to the system itself, we would denominate the external evidence of the gospel. Such is the evidence derived from miracles, prophecy, and history.

In relation to prophecy, we have but two remarks to make. *First*, it is a maxim not less of the philosophy of human na-



ture, than of revealed religion, that the man who can foretell future events, not established by the ordinary course of nature, must be under the influence of Omniscient illumination; for nothing short of the infinite prescience of Deity, can say what events will take place in future, whose cause cannot be traced to the established laws of nature. This, we conceive to be a view of the case, that no human ingenuity can successfully disparage.

Again, the truth of Christianity depending entirely upon facts, we ask you to consider the birth, life, ministry, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. How were they attested? Upon these facts the first preachers founded their story and preaching. Jesus Christ was neglected, deserted, and murdered. His followers could expect nothing but persecution, outrage and death; and yet they persisted in affirming facts, of which they were mostly the eye and ear witnesses, and when they were not, they had the best possible means of information—means that for ever precluded the possibility of mistake or deception. In this way, a Jewish peasant that took his birth from the manger, and his disciples from the fishing-boat, changed the religion of the world! The principal facts alluded to, transpired in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. *Here*, these facts were *first* publicly asserted by the first preachers, and maugre all opposition, the religion spread, in every direction, into different countries, conquering the most inveterate prejudices, and subduing the most confirmed habits.

The Christian story hath never varied. The Gospels and Epistles—original letters and controversial writings, penned by apostles and apostolic men, in the first and two or three succeeding centuries, agree in stating the facts. The testimony of Jewish and Pagan writers is to the same effect, in relation to many of the facts; at least, the gospel story is negatived by none of them. Christian and heathen authors

agree, that a religion, now possessing the greater part of the civilized world, sprung up at this time, or about this time, in the city of Jerusalem in Judea. Here is the effect; and what adequate cause can be assigned, except that assigned in the gospel, and by the advocates of our religion, and negatively admitted by its adversaries? We allude to the supernatural story of the gospel, in relation to the person and advent of Christ. We are furnished with the detail of these facts by different authors—written at different times, and in different places; and addressed to the very people among whom these miracles were wrought, and ever afterward appealed to. Every supposition, resolving these miracles into fraud, is negated. They were not performed in secret—were not momentary, nor tentative, nor ambiguous—were not performed under the sanction of authority, nor in affirmance of received notions and customs. The evidence supporting all this was contemporary with the facts—was produced upon the spot—it continued—it involved interests of the greatest importance to the Jew and Pagan, as well as Christian; and yet, the evidence of these facts was never called in question. This evidence destroyed the worship of the synagogue, and forbade the rites and practices of Paganism. It called for a new creed, and new conduct; and yet, with all these appalling and deterring considerations in the way, the Christian religion obtained in the world, and was embraced by millions. This, however, was impossible, unless we admit the truth of the mission.

From the date of the first book of Moses, to that of the one completing the volume of the New Testament, is about twenty centuries. Add to this, that the Scriptures were written by twenty-eight or thirty different authors, and are divided into sixty-six different publications, yet, these collected at an early period into one volume, exhibit throughout

a most wonderful consistency; substantially agreeing in all their details, doctrines and duties.

The early and first writings of the sacred penmen were transcribed, translated, and sent into different countries, and in different languages—imposition was literally impossible—detection must have been the inevitable result of forgery. The conclusion, therefore is, that this document has come down to us, substantially unimpaired and uninjured. The lightning of God's wrath has guarded every page, while his mercy breathed in every line!

Look, then, at the *facts* of Christianity—their *publication*,—“beginning at Jerusalem”—the *religion* of the world changed—*uniformity* of the testimony—evidence of Jews and Pagans—variety, and yet agreement in the testimony—evidence contemporary with the facts—compilation of the Bible—its circulation by translation and transcription. No one book of the Holy Scriptures (sixty-six in number) can be understood without the rest—all are so analogically and collaterally connected, that each is a key to the other. Look at the testimony of Christ and his apostles—*miracles*—*prophecy*—the impossibility of forging the Scriptures, in the age in which the facts recorded in them are said to have taken place, or in any succeeding age—the predictions fulfilled, and now being fulfilled—weigh all these considerations, and say, Christianity is *true*; or rid yourself of the difficulties in which you must inevitably be involved, when you *can*!

If it be objected, that the Jewish and Pagan historians, deposing to the truth of the facts of Christianity, are not sufficiently numerous, we reply—that there were so many things of a superstitious and incredible character among the Jews, in the estimation of the heathen world, that it was not likely that any notice would be taken of the prodigies of Christianity, by Pagan authors contemporary with Jesus

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Christ and his apostles. Again, so many pretended prodigies, local miracles and divinations, existed in the heathen world, at the time of the Saviour's ministry, that hearing of any thing of this kind from Judea, would not be likely to excite the attention of the learned and philosophic among them, for some time. According to the account of St. Matthew, the fame of Jesus Christ went out "throughout all Syria, and multitudes followed him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond Jordan." The work of no historian living in any of these countries or places, at the time alluded to, has come down to us, in which notice is not taken of the Christian religion, corresponding with the Christian account. Pontius Pilate, in his "Acts," so called, transmitted to Tiberius the emperor, expressly notices the Christian institution and its Founder. This work is quoted by Justin Martyr, in his well-known controversy with Crescens the Cynic, when he challenged him to a controversy before the Roman Senate, and Crescens declined. Tertullian quotes the same work, and so does Eusebius; though it is now extinct. Should it be alleged, that no Roman historian has noticed this report on the part of the procurators of Judea to Tiberius the emperor, we reply, how *few* of the historians of that age, have reached us! Again, for example, Ulpian, the celebrated Roman lawyer, published all the infernal edicts against the Christians, but these are not noticed by either Tacitus or Suetonius, the principal historians of the Roman empire, at this time. And must we, therefore, say that the works of the former are spurious? If **there** never had been any genuine Acts of Pilate, why the spurious, now extant? Can that be counterfeited which never had a being; or is it likely it would be? Jesus Christ existed—Tacitus—Suetonius—Pliny—Josephus, and others.

The taxation of the empire by Augustus Cæsar, that

brought the reputed parents of Jesus Christ to Bethlehem, is mentioned by Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dion. The "star in the East," is attested by Chalcideus. The slaughter of the infants by Herod, is recorded by Macrobius and others. The flight of Christ to Egypt is mentioned by Celsus, and admitted. The death of Christ under Pontius Pilate is recorded by Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and Julian. The miracles of Christ are expressly admitted by Julian, Porphyry, and Hierocles. That Jesus Christ foretold future events, is asserted by Phlegon, in his *Annals*, also Peter's miracles.

The darkness and earthquake at the death of Christ, are asserted by Phlegon and Trallian. That Christ was worshipped as God, that the churches met, celebrated sacraments and lovefeasts, sang hymns, and would suffer death before they would blaspheme, is the report of Pliny the Younger, who lived only seventy years after the death of Christ. The miracles of Peter are admitted by Porphyry and Celsus. Here are ten facts, of a topical nature, recorded in the New Testament, by ten or a dozen heathen historians, and mentioned by, perhaps, a hundred Christian writers before the age of Constantine. *Can there be any mistake about all this?*

The earthquake and darkness at the death of Christ, were inserted in the public register of the Roman empire; and frequently appealed to by the Fathers, in their controversies with Jews and Pagans. Again, the earthquake and darkness were never denied by the Jews of that time, or any contemporary Pagan author. Many of the miracles of Christ are admitted in the Jewish Talmud—a work of later date than the Gospel history, and altogether inimical to Christianity. Further, Celsus attests that the history of Jesus Christ was written by his associate, contemporary disciples. He speaks of it as a fact of public notoriety, and his testimony

is decisive of the fact. Celsus quotes passages from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He wrote one hundred years after the date of the principal books of the New Testament. But during this one hundred years, the books of the New Testament are frequently quoted and referred to by Christian writers. Of the competency of their testimony, we can judge in two ways. First, by attending to the men who wrote, and their manner of writing; and secondly, by attending to the people to whom their works were addressed. Look at the plainness and sincerity of the writers—look at the honest, unadorned, and unlabored manner, in which they relate facts. And further, it was impossible to deceive the people.

Clement, mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, writing to the Church at Corinth, mentions St. Paul's Epistle to that Church, as a matter of general notoriety. Ignatius to the Ephesians, mentions St. Paul's Epistle to them. Polycarp to the Philippians, names St. Paul's Epistle to them also. Now, would they have done this, if no such documents existed, when it was completely in the power of thousands to falsify their statements?

The silence of Josephus is very naturally accounted for. If Josephus had not known the facts of the gospel to be genuine and authentic, he would have told us they were not. This, however, he dare not do. And unwilling to say any thing that might tend to the aggrandizement of the new religion, he was silent as to the miraculous part of the Christian argument, except a very brief notice of the person of our Lord. We find Josephus, however, taking notice of fifty or sixty facts, connected with the local, political, and religious condition of the Jews, that are directly noticed, or more incidentally alluded to in the New Testament. This will, at least, prove the antiquity of the New Testament; and show

that the writers were well acquainted with the people and country of Judea.

Infidels sometimes allege, that the Christian argument is weakened by the absence of Jewish and Pagan testimony to the miraculous pretensions of the New Testament; but we have much of this kind of testimony—more could not have been expected. A Pagan or Jewish author would exhibit a sorry picture of the rational nature of man, in attesting the numerous and profoundly astonishing miracles of the first age of the Christian epoch—miracles irresistibly demonstrative of the truth of our religion; and yet, professing not to believe in this religion, founded upon such miraculous facts! But when we meet with learned Jews and Pagans, who witnessed these facts, or otherwise became acquainted with them, furnishing mankind with a statement of them, avowing at the same time, their belief in the religion founded upon them, the whole assumes an air of consistency and credibility. And of this class are found in the first centuries Quadratus, Aristides, and Athenagoras, of Athens—all Athenian philosophers. Joseph the Arimathean, a senator of the Jewish Sanhedrim—Dionisius, a member of the Athenian Areopagus—Flavius Clemens, of the Roman senate. In Alexandria, Dionisius, Clemens, Ammonius, and Anatolius; also Origen. These were all men of literature and distinction, converted from Judaism and Paganism; and this too, at a time when they could expect little else than persecution, insult, and death. They could not have been deceived.

I now assert, that Christianity has the suffrage of all antiquity, profane or sacred, from Moses and Herodotus, down to the modern classification of historians. The Phœnician, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman historians, poets, and philosophers, agree in the main, with the Mosaic account of creation;

Is the fall—the flood—the passage of the Red Sea—the rite of circumcision—the age of the patriarchs—the miracles of Elijah—the history of Jonah—the invasion of Judah and Israel by Sennacherib and Shalmanezar, are subjects of frequent mention, among the authors of antiquity. Upon the whole, we find ourselves able to press into the service of Christianity, almost every historian of every age and country, from the first to the last who has written.

Important facts, whether miraculous or otherwise, might have been presented from Adam to Moses, by verbal communication. Moses was contemporary with Amram his father—his brother with Levi. Moses was also acquainted with Kohath his grandfather, who was contemporary with Jacob—he with Isaac—he with Abraham—he with Shem—he with Noah—he with Methuselah—he with Adam. In the times of Moses, every man could trace his pedigree to Adam, without difficulty or contradiction. And it is a little remarkable, that no very serious errors in religion were ever broached, until about twelve hundred years after Moses; say in Alexander's time—that is, if we except idolatry. But errors, such as the doctrine of the non-creation of matter, and the eternity of the world, were never known, for at least eleven centuries after Moses.

We now invite attention to the evidence of PROPHECY.

Suppose only ten men had prophesied—each delivered five distinct criteria or signs, by which to designate the Messiah. Suppose no inspiration in the matter at all. Now, what is the chance for and against the accomplishment of these prophecies? If we examine the question upon mathematical principles, the chance against the concurrent accomplishment of all these prophecies, is the fiftieth power or part of two to unity! That is, the probability against the case proposed, is more than *eleven hundred and twenty-five millions* to ONE!



And yet, there were more than *ten* prophets—more than *five* signs; and yet all came to pass, although the chances of miscarriage, and the probabilities of failure were 1125,000,000 to ONE! If this be not a strong case, Heaven and earth must fail in producing one!

The day on which our Lord was crucified, Mr. Ferguson has shown, by the most accurate astronomical calculations, was the 14th of the month Nisan, answering to the 3d of our April in that year. For the Passover did not occur on Friday for thirteen years before, or seven after. Now, at this time, the eclipse could not have been natural; for this can only take place at the *new* moon, but the Passover was always held at the *full* moon. Again, the continuance of the darkness for three hours, proves it supernatural; for the sun can never be eclipsed, in a natural way, more than fifteen minutes, to any one part of the earth.

Again, look at the *efficacy* of Christianity! See its influence upon the individual condition of man—its gradual spread, and progressive prevalence in every part, and all ages of the world—its predicted triumphs, and final issue, in the world's conversion! It provides for the forgiveness of sin—for holiness of heart and life—and heavenly happiness beyond the grave! It secures our spiritual illumination and renewal—our final salvation, in the unmolested enjoyment of the high rewards of the second Paradise!

Look, further, at the final issues of Christianity! Its influence shall spread illimitably, and extend interminably—wide as the family of man, and perennial as the years of millennial glory—crowds of Christian immortals shall everywhere be seen—the grass of the earth, and the stars of heaven, are their inspired similitude—the garden of Eden shall everywhere be presented in its primeval beauty and magnificence!

Finally, earth shall become the resting-place of Heaven's light—already the stupendous features of the Millennium are gathering on the face of the moral world—and soon the triumphant song of gratitude to God shall rise from the altar of a thousand nations, Alleluia! Salvation! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

## SERMON VIII.

## NATURE AND DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

“And you, that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”—COL. i. 21–23.

CHRISTIANITY is a system, simple and absolute. It everywhere presents a stubborn and incorrigible unity of character. It is, in no point of view, a confirmation of what man had before discovered; but is a discovery of that which was totally unknown—of that which we could know in no other way; and yet, was most important to be known. It is not the design of Christianity to improve upon the former plan; but to produce a new creation. She does not intend the relumination of a slumbering spark of divinity within us; but the implantation of a new and living principle, whose superinduction is essential to the recovery of our fallen nature.

But, however important the Christian religion was, we had neither the merit to claim, nor the power to obtain it. It is the gift of God, in Christ Jesus—the gospel of his grace.

#### I. THE ALIENATION AND ENMITY WITH WHICH THE NATURAL CONDITION OF MAN STANDS CHARGED.

Man is, by nature, *fallen, depraved, and sinful*. The period of his innocence closed with the first rebellion of his

original progenitor. Since then, Heaven has dealt with our common nature, as delinquent in *law*, and depraved in *fact*. The law awarded condemnation to the whole of our race; and the original father and representative of our kind, handed down the impurity of his nature to every member of each succeeding generation.

Although the great Mediator removed the curse, in law, and provided for our recovery; yet, the application of this provision is necessary to the removal of our native impurity. The atonement of Jesus Christ changed our *forensic* relation to God; but its *application* by the power of the Holy Ghost, is necessary to effect a change of nature. The one is a *legal*, the other a *moral* change. The one renders us an object of the *favor* of God, the other, of his *complacency*. The one furnishes a *title* to heaven, the other, a *meetness* for heaven.

Christ procures for us a deed of entry—the Holy Spirit furnishes us with the necessary fitness. Christ prepares by his atonement, heaven for us—the Spirit prepares us for heaven. Wrath is removed, and original guilt cancelled; but the defection of our nature superinduced, is not removed by the act of atonement; but by its practical effects, when received by faith, and applied by the power of the Holy Ghost. The atonement affects our *condition*, and its application changes our *nature*.

The doctrine of human depravity is a great cardinal point in the history of our redemption. If it is discarded, the religion of Christ becomes a solemn nothing—a gilded toy—a magnificent trifle—a splendid cheat. If human nature be not debased and fallen, its reëdification by the power of the gospel, is an insulting farce!

In the case of the great head and patriarch of mankind, allegiance formed the ruling principle of his creation. When,

therefore, he surrendered this principle, by an act of wanton rebellion, he was thrown off into banishment from God, and sin and death were entailed upon all this world's generations—and so, have come down to us, and will reach the latest posterity, in a descending ruin. The God of heaven was dethroned from that preëminence of trust and affection that belonged to him;—a moral disruption took place between God and the world; and an unhappy state of things was induced, securing to all posterity the inbeing of sin and moral pollution.

Man's natural state is now a sinful one; and owing to his depravity, and the wild uproar of his passions, he is found, without conversion, upon the verge of impending, eddying ruin. He carries about him the hell of ingratitude and guilt, that is continually worrying in his breast. Man is now the fugitive of care and guilt—his passions and feelings are all in chaos—his heart is unfurnished with any sense of God—God is unheeded and unknown. Our natural state is that of utter estrangement—God is deposed from his rightful ascendancy over the heart and mind.

The passions of man, on the broad scale of universal history, dishonor his nature, and grossly becloud his character. Man is not what he was; nor is God the author of his evils. He who is inflexibly holy cannot connive at sin. He who lies not to man in the constancy of the seasons, cannot teach him to deceive. He who scatters his bounties and blessings over the whole field of creation, cannot lead his creatures to hatred and war, execration and murder. No, "ye shall not surely die," said the tempter, and unbelief entered his heart.—"Ye shall be as gods," continued the soothing lips of hell, and immediately pride sprang up in his breast. And in this way, he lost the image and purity of Heaven. It was the voluntary transgression of man, yielding to extraordinary

excitement, that transformed earth into a second hell; and armed the bosom of man with enmity to God; and furnished it with the principles of a fearful alienation from him.

Rejecting all theorizing on this subject, we give it as our opinion, that the Scriptures, by imputation of Adam's guilt, do not mean the *infusion*, by the Creator, of any positive malignity into our nature; but simply, our privation of the image of God, and original rectitude.—The subduction, or withholdment of supernatural grace, which left the mind of an active agent inclined to evil continually, without any principle of counter-operation to lead him to holiness. And this view of the subject will readily account for the fearful and universal corruption of our guilty race—a disease that cannot be cured by the magic of sentimentalism—by the elixir and panacea of the infidel, or semi-Christian moralist.

## II. THE RECONCILIATION.

This *reconciliation* relates to both God and man. When it became practicable for God, consistently, to save man, in virtue of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, God is said to be reconciled; because the aspect and moral attitude of the Deity toward man, are changed—the tone and temper of the sky, so far as man is concerned, are altered—there is, in the language of the New Testament, “peace in heaven.” We are thus reconciled to God, “while enemies.” For the law, now magnified in its satisfaction, becomes the friend and guardian of man. Peace was made between God and all the unborn millions of human progeny.—That is, a *provisional* peace; because of what Christ had done, God could be just, and yet justify the ungodly. Hence, by Christ we have received the atonement or reconciliation.

*Our* reconciliation to God is the effect of *his* to us. The great object of Christ's death was, to remove every legal barrier in the way of our return to God. That return is

directly effected by the agency of the Spirit. Christ obtained eternal redemption for us; and the Spirit leads to the embrace of this salvation. In *provision*, we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ, before our conversion; but in *issue*—in *fact*, not till after. The charter of our redemption, like that of our creation, is contingent—unless we abuse it, it will secure our happiness; but if we do, it stands pledged for our overthrow.

Mercy was placed in arrest of justice. God and men are the high contracting parties. When Jesus Christ uttered his last complaint upon the cross, man was *half* restored; because then Jesus Christ cleared the way of access to the throne of God; and offered the world salvation, in all its freeness and sufficiency. His was a conflict of toil and suffering—a great, and magnanimous achievement. It was a war of strength and suffering, in the highest possible aggravation; because a war of elements infinite—and all in vindication of God's insulted honor. And in this, we see the real transference of an avenging hand from the guilty to the innocent.

The precise *how*, or *modus* of all this, we do not pretend to explain. Let it be sufficient to say, that in the counsels of Heaven, the death of Christ as our Surety and Advocate, was deemed a satisfactory, and an indemnifying reason, why man might obtain pardon and salvation. His death superseded the necessity of ours; and because he died, the law, magnified by his death, does not inexorably demand ours. But if he had not died, the obvious demand of the law would have been, the death of the original delinquent.

This view of the subject accords with the genius of every religion on earth, save *one*, (the Unitarian,) with the history of every nation, and with the experience of every individual from the birth of Adam. All have been convinced that the purity of God must be offended by the transgressions of men; and that his severity would lead him to punish them. All

have founded the hope of pardon in propitiation. All have been arrested by a parapet that must be scaled—a great gulf fixed, that must be overpast.—All have sought indemnity for past offences, before they could find encouragement for future services, or security for future rewards.

### III. THE METHOD BY WHICH THIS RECONCILIATION IS EFFECTED.

The death of Christ—the sacrifice of Christ's humanity, his incarnation and life, were all preparatory to this grand event; but the *death* of Christ is the great argument that obtained a hearing for man in the court of heaven. It was this, that met the demands of law and justice; that is, the ends of government, and the security of the Divine administration.—The *body* of his flesh was necessary—and the *death* of that body was equally necessary. Through death, he “destroyed him that had the power of death.” As Owen says, we meet with the “death of death, in the death of Christ.” Of the exclusive efficiency of this method of recovery, we are to judge by the fact of its adoption with God, who is the best judge and appraiser of things. Although we may not be able to account for the original adoption of this plan, yet after its revelation to man, we can readily see, that no other method could have been adopted, without compromising the truth and perfections of the Deity.

God does nothing unnecessarily;—if then, a method of recovery, less stupendous, would have answered the purposes of our happiness, this would not have been resorted to—God never makes use of *miraculous* means, when *natural* means will answer the end. This proves that no less an event than the death of Christ would or *could* have availed for man. Means with God, never exceed, in effect, the magnitude of the end to which they lead.

Finally, we notice the natural effect—the transforming



influence of this doctrine of atonement. Its practical influence arises from the views given by it; first, of the law of God; secondly, the evil of sin; thirdly, the character of God; fourthly, the love of Christ; fifthly, the relation in which it brings us to God; and finally, the necessity of holiness. The law is what it ought to be; and its enforcement is uniform and unalterable, bringing the mind under the predominant influence of holy and heavenly veneration. *Sin*, though not strictly possessing the property of infinitude, is incalculable in its demerit and guilt, and deserves eternal punishment. Of *God*—he sees the goodness and severity of God combined. There is a union of love and fear—the one renders him cheerful and triumphant; and the other, devout and humble. Of *love*—look at the disinterestedness of the Redeemer—our unworthiness—the value of the blessings bestowed, and the expense at which they have been procured. It conciliates favor, and secures to us the friendship of our offended Lawgiver and final Judge. We are his “purchased possession,” his “peculiar people”—and are, therefore, bound to be holy. The obligation is twofold.—It is an obligation of consistency and gratitude. You are bound to seek an increasing conformity to your Divine Master, and the precepts of his religion. You are bound, whenever you reflect upon this subject, inwardly to indulge the emotion, and loud to swell the song of adoring gratitude, until you shall be prepared, finally, on heavenly harps above, to sweep with bolder sound the deep-toned anthem of your joys—“Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests: and we shall reign for ever and ever!”

#### IV THE END PROPOSED IN THIS DISPENSATION OF MERCY.

This end is our “holiness,” “unblamableness,” and “unreproachableness,” at the period of our final presentment

before the judgment-seat of Christ. In his sight we must stand. The process of judgment will present us before the immediate presence of the judge, whose eye discerns impurity in the heavens, and folly in his angels. During this all-disclosing scrutiny, we must be found *holy*, in relation to God—being saved from sin, in all the variety of its effects upon the inner and outer man; we must be *unblamable*, in ourselves—the influence of the gospel must have sanctified us wholly; we must be *unreprovable*, in relation to our neighbor. The love of God is required, rendering us *unblamable*; the love of our neighbor, rendering us *unreproachable*; and the union of both, constituting us *holy* before God. This preparation meets the wants, and removes the crimes of men. It affords a soul-felt intensity of delight, in the contemplation of approaching beatitude, looking forward to heaven's immortal crowns and unwithering splendors.

*Death and judgment*—the solemnities of the one, and the dreadful formalities of the other, will constitute the process of presentment. Amid the shouts and groans of triumphant and anxious millions, Jesus Christ will occupy the throne of judgment, and award the high recompenses of an eternal scene. *There*, your piety must be of standard weight—of sterling value.—The stipulated scantling of bare-weight duty as to outward forms, will not do.—Essential purity—unspotted holiness is required. *There*, all must appear in person—you cannot send your card or representative—each must answer for himself, and not by his attorney or the filing of a bill!

#### V FINALLY, THE MEANS NECESSARY TO SECURE THIS SALVATION.

It is necessary, they should continue *in the faith*—the belief and love of all the doctrines of the gospel—the love and practice of its duties. They must not relax—must not *misgive*, or *deviate*. Heaven says, “Go forward;” and the

corresponding motto on the Christian's banner is—"I press."

They must be "**grounded**"—fixed on the ground—based upon the foundation; in morals, steadfast, unmoved. "**Settled**"—permanently adhering to first principles—continuing in the same relation—not fugitive—not changing. The Christian is no experimenter—no changeling;—proud of *old* things, and ashamed of *new*, in religion, (we speak of its great charter,) he is always "following on to know the Lord," until his "goings forth shall be as the morning."

Whenever you summon the attributes of your mind to counsel, enlightened by the word of God, let decision preside. You must appreciate the sublimity of your high vocation—live to God, and for eternity.—Life should be a scene of holy action, as it is, of immortal interest. *As you live, so you shall suffer or enjoy in eternity.* Thrones in heaven, or chains in hell await you, so soon as life's brief play is over, and the curtain of duration, by the hand of doom, is dropped on the scene.

A sense of God must pervade your every hour and every employment. The purity and principles of heaven must take effect upon the heart—there must be an influx of heavenly principles and heavenly affections. You must "*lay aside every weight,*" as the lofty tree in autumn, shakes down his green glories to battle with the coming winter. You must swear "*to do or die.*" All the graces and virtues must harmoniously unite, and emit their blended radiance, in the life and conversation.—*Then*, every step you take, you shall tread upon a flower. *Then*, whether you famish in dungeons or wander in exile, your poverty shall be venerable—your humility, august; and in all affliction, you shall rise like the toiled lion, when he shakes from his mane the dew-drops of the morning, and move on unhurt in your hopes, unimpaired in your strength.

“Not moved.”—This heavenly climax, reduced to faithful practice, is the guaranty of your safety. You cultivate immortal virtues, and deathless hopes—you cast away the fickle, polluting imagination of the visionary in religion—you ask for the “old paths;” and with patriarchal firmness and primitive ardor, you “walk therein.” You stand as the “mountains around about Jerusalem;” and cast forth your roots as Lebanon. Beautiful as Tirzah, comely as the holy city, the beams of your house are cedar, and your rafters fir; and you exhibit the blushing glories of the garden of Engeddi.

“Hope of the gospel.”—We hope for future succor and support in life—for the same in death—for the resurrection of our bodies, and the happiness of heaven. This, the Christian has constantly in view. Amid all the storms of life, he stands unyielding and unbending—he looks upward to his God without fear; and forward to eternity with complacency—the inner man is regaled and heightened into rapture, by the smile of a present God. And these heavenly emotions must be rivetted and substantiated in practice.

This hope divides itself into three parts—it respects life, death, and futurity; especially, the second coming of Jesus Christ. It implies a firm persuasion of safety and triumph, in relation to each; and a glad anticipation of what each is to present.—The ground of this hope, is what Christ accomplished at his first coming.

The memory of the Christian shall be embalmed by time, and hallowed by eternity! The radiance that beams through the palsied organs of his dying body, shall gild the evening of his earthly existence with the anticipated splendors of immortal life—the bow of his promise is seen arching the heavens, and reaching down to earth to impart its radiance to the gloom of the sepulchre—death is the price of his passport to heaven—the stepping-stone to a better world—hope dawns

upon the sadness of the heart. Thus, this hope shall sustain the believer, when life flies hunted in every quivering vein. And when time's last whirlwind shall sweep the vaulted sky, religion shall cry in the ear of the "mouldering urn,"—"This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality."

The moment of our departure is on the wing, to overtake that of our redemption from the grave. One of my friends sleeps in the dust of the earth, and the diameter of the globe separates me from another; but the word of life rescues that one from the grave, and restores me to the embrace of the other. The soul resumes its empire; and the body shakes off the power of gravitation for ever; and we glory in the doctrine, that virtue, though in dust, shall be the care of Heaven; and to the anguish that kneels over the grave, we hold up the hope that triumphs in "the resurrection of the just." Thus may we continue to indulge in the well-accredited hope of an immortal and glorified existence, until the last grand apocalypse of God's mercy shall be displayed; and eternity,—the tenure of our bliss, shall spread her comforts for the millions of the redeemed; and heaven, the sum of human hope and human happiness, shall unbosom her echoes for ever!

## SERMON IX.

## CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”—  
PSALM ii.

## SUBJECT PROPOSED.

It will have occurred to any intelligent reader of the Bible, that the person and kingdom of Jesus Christ, with their kindred and appropriate bearings upon human happiness and human destiny, constitute, in this psalm, the theme of description, and subject of celebration. In attending to its brief exposition, we shall notice the following points.

1. *The original opposers of Christ's person and kingdom, as alleged in the text.*

2. *The nature and extent of the opposition.*
3. *Its relative influence and weakness.*
4. *Its punishment.*
5. *The security of the Church.*
6. *The personal glory of Messiah, as celebrated in the text.*
7. *The administration of his kingdom.*

I. FIRST, *the original opposers of Christ's person and kingdom.*

At the time the words of the text were uttered, (twenty-eight generations, according to St. Matthew, before the birth of Christ,) the grand religious division of this world's population, was into Jew and Gentile. The latter, a large division, passing under the denomination of the *heathen*, and the former that of the *people*. When it is asked, therefore, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" it is to be understood of the great mass of human kind, without any, unless it be *individual*, exceptions. The whole heathen world stands charged; and the people of the Jews are equally implicated. The opposition of the Pagan differed from that of the Jew, both in *nature* and *manner*; but in *principle* it was the same. It was the purpose and ambition of the Pagan, not to submit to the administration and claims of the Messiah at all, but to continue at the footstool of his own idolatry. The Jew believed in the doctrine of Christ's Messiahship and regal dominion; but he erred in not applying this doctrine to the proper person, when in the character, and with the pretensions of Messiah, he made his appearance among men. The Pagan acted from feeling—the Jew, from principle. The one went to work instinctively, the other premeditatedly. The one urged his opposition because he *felt* it, the other because he *thought* it necessary. The Pagans *raged*, to suppress the light and principles of the new religion—to prevent its adoption and practice. They exerted

themselves with the most infernal industry to infamize the person of our Lord, and degrade the character of his religion. Witness the conduct of Herod and Pilate—enemies all their life, until hell interposed a mediation, and made them friends—sworn, eternal foes up to this time, they sacrilegiously agree that the blood of a parricidal murder shall seal the covenant of peace between them. Can the annals of the damned present a scene of more unparalleled infamy! Leagued for the destruction of goodness embodied in the person of the Son of God, they indulge in the fiendish merriment of hell, while the crucified Sufferer died to redeem them.

The Hebrew word translated *rage*, signifies a *noisy tumultuous assembly*—the madness and roarings of an infuriated mob. Witness the disordered multitude that essayed to take him in the garden—that shouted his condemnation in the judgment hall of Pilate. Witness the maddened populace that clamored for his crucifixion, and insulted his dying agonies, until the convulsed earth and indignant heavens took up the story of his wrongs. Witness the slaughter of the infants by Herod the Great—the murdering dagger of the tetrarch of Galilee plunged in the bosom of *several thousand* innocents, in order to effect the death of *one*! Look at Herod Antipas with his men of war, and the Roman government mocking and setting him at naught, and the Roman emperor and kings of the earth, subsequently opposing the triumphs of his cross and spread of his kingdom!

The Jews “imagined a vain thing,” in supposing, first, that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah; and secondly, that it was their duty to destroy the Pretender. In this, the vanity of their imagination seemed to consist. But more at large, in looking for a temporal prince—a secular potentate, instead of a Deliverer “to turn away ungodliness from Jacob”—in attempting to ruin the character and cause of Christ by abuse, scandal, and stigma—by supposing that their cause was tri-



umphant when they had put him to death; whereas, his empire was to be founded in the blood they were shedding—in sealing the sepulchre, to invalidate the prediction, that he would rise again—in hiring the soldiers to *lie*, in order to discredit the fact of his resurrection—in persecuting, imprisoning, and murdering his apostles, ministers, and followers.

## II. *The NATURE and EXTENT of the opposition.*

It argues alienation from God, and insubordination to his will; but there seems to attach to this opposition something *peculiar*—a speciality worthy of notice. It is urged against Jehovah and his Son, in council and operation, lavishing infinite wisdom and infinite goodness upon the great question of human recovery. If men could have worshipped a God, and selected a religion, clothed in the attributes of their own liking and imagination, all would have been well; but *that* deference of the understanding and heart, required by the Christian religion, they were unwilling and determined not to award to Heaven. Without cause or just pretext, the malice of hell rankled in their bosom, and they dipped their tongues in the gall of the damned. Thus the nations of the earth rejected the only “Hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof,” and were taking their random and unpiloted way to hell.

The **EXTENT** of this opposition.—It is entire, unqualified, and irrespective, in its character. It is not partial, limited, or occasional—it was not a paltry, provincial attack. The relations of the Deity are to be subverted, and his claims totally abrogated. “Let *us*”—we *all* are concerned—the whole Pagan world, and the whole nation of the Jews. Earth becomes a field of competition—an arena of hostility—they refuse all compound or compromise—the everlasting foundations must be *loosened*, and the throne of God crumble, or this infidel conspiracy will continue to wave the standard of defiance. It was a desperate resolution, even for hell to **make**

One would hardly suppose that such a sentiment could actuate the damned, or burrow in the bosom of a fiend!

### III. *The WEAKNESS and RELATIVE INFLUENCE of this opposition.*

It affects not the counsel of God's love—it affects not the purposes of his grace—the atonement and administration of his Son—the grace and agency of his Spirit. Its direct and reflex influence affects those, and those only, who are concerned in this fury of the nations to overthrow the long-looked-for, and now-arrived Messiah. The moth shall eat them, and their blossom go up as the dust! the wind shall take them, and the whirlwind shall scatter them! What will all this rage and riot effect? Does it disturb—does it disquiet the Eternal? No, all their bustling menace, their array of hostility cannot move Him. He occupies his place in the heavens, his throne of state, calm and undisturbed. By an anthropopathy here, a mode of speech ascribing to him the passions of men, Jehovah is said to “laugh,” and “have them in derision;”—signifying *his* security, and *their* certain disappointment, and consequent defeat. They found themselves galled, thwarted, and borne down by the irresistible encounter of an Almighty, all-prevailing Mind. Can they pluck the Regent of the universe from his throne? Can they disannul the installation of the Son of God in the holy kingdom?

### IV *The PUNISHMENT of Christ's enemies.*

Nations and individuals engaged in this infernal conspiracy, are visited by the curse and displeasure of the Deity. The indignation and overthrow their rebellion renders necessary, shall be faithfully awarded to them. “He that sits in the heavens” he has drawn about him, as the temple of his visible glory—the pavilion of his residence, “shall

laugh"—shall eye with unaltered look this dark and gloomy complot. "Jehovah shall have them in derision." With an aspect of composed, but determined contempt, he will restrain the assault, render powerless their efforts—depose tyrants, and tread down princes in the dust! He will ask, where is now my resourceless throne, my fallen Son, and his dishonored religion, as you vainly imagined, and wickedly plotted? They exchange the frenzy and elamor of persecution and blood, for the curse of God, and buffetings of a stormy hell. He silently despises them, until they have exhausted their rage, and spent their time in nonsubjection and opposition to him; and then he speaks, when their punishment becomes necessary by a law of his goodness, in order that he may not do injustice to the universe. Notice, especially, the ruin of the Jews, and the overthrow of the Pagan, persecuting nations of the earth. Where are Herod and Pilate *now*? One was struck dead by a visitation of God, and the other murdered himself in *exile*. What would now be the decision of Caiaphas, could he recall his deed? Where, in heaven or hell, shall we find the mad-struck multitudes who cried, "Crucify, crucify him," even when rocks and mountains broke their eternal silence, and pleaded the cause of murdered innocence!

#### V *The SECURITY of the Church.*

This opposition affects not "the hill of Zion." Its foundations are stable as the throne of Messiah, and permanent as his administration. She has stood firmly based upon the immutability of her great foundation; and braved the waste and war of ages. Like the waves of the ocean that climb the rocks in noisy war, and die away in foam, when God has blown upon the nations, they have melted; *they were*, but *are not*. The Church has been secure in her foundation, in her charter, in the purposes and regards of Jehovah—in

the hands of the great Head and King of Zion—in her internal and external resources—her actual and anticipated triumphs; and this security shall continue till its militant organization and prospects shall merge in the eternal fruition and triumphant splendors of the heavenly world!

#### VI. MESSIAH'S PERSONAL GLORY.

In any discussion connected with revealed religion, revelation is our only guide. In view, therefore, of what the Bible says, and upon the basis of Scripture testimony, we affirm, that Jesus Christ is the God of nature and grace—he is Lord both of the living and dead—the Jehovah of the Old, and the only wise God of the New Testament. Shown from his names and titles—his nature and perfections—his works—his relations, and a variety of miscellaneous considerations, interspersed throughout the Sacred Scriptures.

What is he said to *be*, from which this is inferred? What *are* his revealed properties and perfections? What *has* he *done*? What *is* he *doing*? What *will* he *do*? And what *will* he *be* to man? He is declared to be the true and eternal God. The Bible awards to him the incommunicable attributes and intransferable prerogatives of Deity. He is the Creator of all things—he is the upholder of all things, and administrator in the Divine kingdom. The object of the Christian's trust, confidence, and glory for ever! At his command, the heavens spread their effulgent canopy; earth started from her dark profound; and ocean trembled into birth!

HE IS MAN.—The two natures mysteriously and ineffably united in the same individual person. If this be mysterious, it is not more so than many things in nature, the evidence of whose existence is indubitable. Instance the three component distinctions that enter, essentially, into the indivi-

duated identity of man—soul, body, and spirit. He assumed our poverty, that we might inherit the treasures of his God-head.

HE IS MEDIATOR.—A moral disruption had taken place between God and man. Heaven and earth were separated, in feeling and destiny; and the great question was, how to originate a bond of fellowship that would secure the dignity of the Divine throne, and at the same time, prevent the impending evils of man's defection from original righteousness. In his Divine nature, he supports the throne of God, and in his human, claims brotherhood with man. He moves Heaven to pity, and man to repentance. The human nature of Christ gave him a brother's right and a brother's interest, in every human being; whilst his Divine nature rendered his sacrifice available, and invested the law with a glory beyond what it could have acquired by the penal extinction of the universe.

HE IS OUR LIGHT.—He is not less the illuminator of the moral, than Creator of the natural world. In nature and in grace, he is the light-giving and life-sustaining God.

HE IS OUR ATONEMENT.—It is only through him that the clemency of Heaven can cover the curse-devoted head of man.

HE IS OUR LIFE.—He is our life, in all the varieties of its moral process, from the original change of our forensic relation to God, down to the period when the palms and the sceptres of Paradise become ours for ever.

HE IS OUR JUDGE.—Our final audit is before his seat. He will finally applaud or condemn, receive or reject, save or destroy. He will erect his tribunal upon the flaming ruins of the universe, and summon Pilate and Herod to his bar! He will display the repellent and injured glories of his God-head, in the damnation of his enemies.

HE IS THE OBJECT OF HEAVENLY WORSHIP.—His per-

son shall be the focus of vision—his throne the centre of convergence—the goal of approach, and his name the triumph of angels and the glory of believers. Enthroned in the hearts of the redeemed and unfallen, he receives their adoration for ever!

## VII. MESSIAH'S KINGDOM.

His kingdom is *omnipresent*. His presence fills all space, and is contained in none. By a mysterious, incommunicable property of his nature, he is as truly and essentially everywhere, as *I am here*. From the palace of the king to the clay-built hovel of the mendicant, his presence, everywhere, pervades the abode and business of man. He reigns in the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace; but especially, the latter. Saint, sinner, and devil, are alike circumscribed by his presence, and subject to his reign. He is everywhere, by a boundless knowledge—by a general influence—by a universal direction. His common claims are coëxtensive with his being. For him to *be*, is for him to *reign*. Where he is, he rules, and sways, and governs. He is the everywhere-reigning, omnipresent God.

HIS KINGDOM IS CONSTANT.—His reign is one great, and indivisible act. It is an uninterrupted process—an unbroken continuity of doing and dealing. He never wearies; he never intermits the grand process. ;

HIS REIGN IS SOVEREIGN.—His own eternal mind furnishes his every counsel and plan. His own unwasting fulness furnishes all the requisite resources of his administration. Angels and men are but children, in his high plans, who, so far from being consulted on the subject of his reign, can never comprehend, without revelation, the maxims and reasons that govern him. The eyes of angels swim in darkness—man, in the dust, is only allowed to say, *He reigns*—

and devils with devils damned, find themselves secure in the toils of his omnipotence.

HIS REIGN IS MYSTERIOUS.—Mysterious to us—to all created minds; because of the fallible reach, and limited extent of all derived intelligence. In all God's works, we have to contend with the profoundness of an unsearchable latency. In this state of things, God is only seen in twilight—there is a well-apportioned mixture of the luminous and obscure—we see enough to determine us in favor of religion and heaven—and although we know *in part*, yet the mind is flooded with certainty, and the heart with rapture—we submit, therefore, that clouds and darkness settle on the *rest*.

HIS REIGN IS WISE.—Because of the peculiar appositeness between all the means and the intended end. What his will ordained, his own Almighty arm can do; and his administration uniformly results in the end proposed to himself, when he first commenced the evolution of its details.

HIS REIGN IS PEACEFUL.—A reconciled God—the peace-speaking blood of his Son—the heartfelt pacification of an accusing conscience—friendship with Heaven, and affection for our fellows, all tell us that the reign of Messiah is peaceful; and this peace shall everywhere diffuse itself, till enmity shall only exist in a solitary corner of the universe—the *hell* of infidels, and the *home* of devils!—till the name and the nature of oppression shall wither from the world!—till we shall never again hear the death-song that echoes the dirge of the slain!

HIS REIGN IS EQUITABLE.—Each has his rights, and realizes the moral product of his claims, of whatever kind they may be. If the ills of fallen humanity afflict the pious Lazarus *here*, in heaven he shall flourish and luxuriate in all the refined excesses of overpowering bliss!

(GRANDEUR OF HIS REIGN.—If we look at the sublimity of

his essence—the immensity of his works—the efficiency of his will—and the splendor of his deeds, we shall at once decide on the grandeur and glory of his reign.

HIS REIGN IS JUST.—Each has his due strictly apportioned to him. Rewards and punishments correspond with the equalized relations of things; especially his punitive justice. Instance Adam—the old world—cities of the plain—cavalry of Pharaoh—Canaanitish nations—apostate Israel—army of Sennacherib—the Jews—Pilate and Herod—Pagan Rome—the French Republic, and other cases, where the curse of God has visited his enemies, and “come like water into their bones.”

HIS REIGN IS GRACIOUS.—He has provided that his banished be not expelled from him, unless they reject the provisions of his mercy. If any man be damned, he must *reprobate* himself, by *refusing* to be saved. These are the only terms on which Messiah will damn a solitary human being. The first and leading aspect of his administration, is that of *mercy*. The aspect of severity is contingent, and depends on the rebellion and disobedience of his subjects.

HIS REIGN IS EFFICIENT.—It never knew weakness or decay, disappointment or defeat. As the river of God to a dying world, it has rolled on with strong and unwasting current—the floating wrecks of Pagan idolatry, and infidel folly, are strewn upon its surface, and the wave of revolution is removing them from the sight of man.

HIS REIGN IS EVERLASTING.—Ere time began, it existed in plan and purpose—during the centuplication of this world's generations, it has existed in actual force and practical detail; and when the tide of ages shall have rolled away, it shall exist in its issues, wide as the wants of the redeemed, perennial and glorious as the years and grandeur of eternity! From the hill of God we take another look, and the visions



of glory rise before us—the eye rolls ardent o'er the wondrous scene—we see the nearing and enrapturing prospect of increase, triumph, and conquest—the only remaining son of the forest, and the last lingering Turk, kiss Emmanuel—regenerated millions echo the conversion of the world, and heaven and earth exchange the shout,—Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

## SERMON X:

## THE LOVE OF GOD.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—JOHN iii. 16.

THE gratuitous benevolence of the Deity, exercised in the recovery of our fallen world, constitutes the great theme of primeval prophecy, and historical detail, in the Old, and engages the argument, the narrative, and the devotion of the Scriptures of the New Testament. It is a theme the Church has proclaimed in her testimony, and heaven celebrated in her songs, from the foundation of the world. It has ever been the great principle of moral action among Christians, giving animation to piety, and stability to virtue. We love God, because he first loved us. It is the grand peculium of the gospel.

In the discussion of the subject, we propose the following particulars :—

1. *The love of God is peculiar in its nature.*
2. *It is extraordinary in its manifestation.*
3. *The object or end contemplated in this manifestation of the love of God.*
4. *The means necessary in order to a participation in its benefits.*
5. *The obligations arising.*
6. *The life promised.*

I. If the *Divine love* was PECULIAR in its nature, it must be different in kind, from any of the various descriptions of love current among men and angels : and this is the view of the subject we beg leave to take. In doing this, we are aware we shall commit ourselves with some for whose opinions, in this case, we have no great reverence. For, of necessity, we shall have to deny, as well as affirm. And the fastidious cynic will tell you it is treating a subject *negatively* and *positively*. Be it so. There is no mode of discussion in the Bible, that is more common or frequent, than that of negation and affirmation. For example—"Jehovah is *not* a man that he should repent." "I am God, and *not* man." "The Lord is *not* slack concerning his promise." "God hath *not* called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." God is "*not* willing that any should perish." "We are *not* of them that draw back unto perdition." "*Not* as the offence, so also is the free gift."—It is in this way, the Bible would arrive at a clear and vigorous delineation of important truths.—By denial and assertion—by a process of negation and affirmation. With this example before us, we proceed ; and may God help us !

Such reciprocity of affection and good-will, all will allow, is every way necessary to the existence of friendship. The displeasure of Heaven, must have fallen directly on every paragraph of our history. Without the existence of good-will, or service rendered, Deity could not feel any sort of obligation—and not even then. Our whole character was little better than a compound of weakness and folly—an unalleviated mass of depravity and wretchedness :—our whole name, as a rebellious family, must have risen to heaven, in a tide of the most revolting abomination.

God's love to man did not resemble the love of *friendship* : for we were God's enemies, and reciprocal good-will did not exist between him and his creatures. Nor was it the love of *desire*, objectively considered, or of *society* ; for our rebellion

and depravity had rendered us the objects of Divine hatred and dislike. His was not the love of *gratitude*, or a sense of obligation; for he was under no obligation to man—man had done nothing to create such obligation. It could not have been the love of *approbation*, or *complacency*; for there was nothing in man to approve. Man, in view of any thing in him to recommend him to the Divine favor, must have been held in utter detestation of Heaven. Nor could it have been the love of *grandeur* and *glory*; for heaven teemed with a population incessantly employed in, and spreading the honors of Godhead throughout the hosts of immensity. None of these notions of love among men, come up to the idea of God's love of our world, as noticed in the text. It was peculiar, disinterested, and unprecedented. The records of time and chronicles of eternity, are both at a loss to furnish an example for illustration. Hence, we say the love of God was peculiar in its nature. It was properly the love of *kindness*, extended to rebellious and alienated subjects—extended to objects not only unworthy, but unwilling and averse to *receive*. Thus, this was a new display of character, and one peculiar to God himself. The love of which we speak, was a *tenderness*, which originally and properly can have no seat, except in the bosom of the Deity. It was a tender solicitude—a pitying regard which God alone can feel.

God, in loving our fallen world, *felt and acted like himself*. In doing this, he felt and acted unlike any and every other being in the universe, except those who have since imperfectly copied after him. He loved us when he saw rebellion planting its standard against the majesty of Heaven—when man was making his greatest advantages the subject of inculcation—when we were in exile from him, and hastening with prone career to hell. His bowels sounded with celestial tenderness, when we were making proud battle and impious war

against the throne and monarchy of God—when he knew that this love must draw upon his Son the deadly forfeiture and ransom set. When all the high attributes of his nature were to be put to a severe and delicate test, justice, unassociated with the other perfections of the Divine nature, cried “Let him alone!” but the pitying tenderness of a Father’s heart inquired, in soothing accents, “Ephraim, how shall I give thee up!” High justice must rest appeased—the pressure of the great decree must be borne. The law of God was dishonored in the face of its proclaimed and unalterable sanctions!—The authority of Heaven was stormed!—Man had sold the price of his eternity, bargained away the favor of God, and pawned his immortal hopes! A world broken loose from communion with God, was wandering from him in many a devious tract—and yet, forgiveness found its mysterious conveyance to the sinners of our race!

It was love, when God was not heeded in all our thoughts, or acknowledged in any of our ways. It was love, extended by an offended and outraged Lawgiver to a community of Atheists, bereft of all that allegiance which formed the ruling principle of God’s creation. Jesus Christ in his own unaided greatness, trod the wine-press of the wrath of God—his own arm brought salvation. The unborrowed glories of the Deity rendered him competent to this. In *his* rejection, we see the price of *our* acceptance. The sublime glories of heaven spring from his agonies—angels and men sit in celestial colloquy. Over the wreck of a ruined world, fiends howled below, in hellish triumph, and angels wept above, as angels can! The redeeming love of Christ, is the most sublime and touching memorial of his name. But we forbear; we could not define this love, without a mind of archangelic vigor, familiar with a lexicon of the language of heaven! It was love without end, and without measure, grace.

II. *The love of God was EXTRAORDINARY in its MANIFESTATION.*

The manifestation of this love will appear the more extraordinary, if we attend to the arguments that reasonably might have operated with the Divine mind for its retention. *First*, the wantonness of man's revolt. *Secondly*, the unimpeachable justice of the act of retention. *Thirdly*, the fellowship, intercourse, familiarity, worth, grandeur, glory, and residence in heaven, in relation to the Son sent. *Fourthly*, the amount of agony to which Jesus Christ was to be subjected, and the rejection of him by thousands, after all. But God gave his Son—his *only* Son—his *beloved* Son, for sinners—for *all* sinners—a sacrifice for sin in behalf of them all.

The arguments against this are—*First*, that man was not a weak and sinful being; and therefore, stood in no need of such a sacrifice. Or, *secondly*, that although man had sinned, God was at liberty to pass by sin without punishing it. Or, *thirdly*, that though sinful, man was able to reconcile himself to God, and render his own atonement. *Fourthly*, that the justice of God cannot be vindicated, in punishing the innocent for the guilty. *Fifthly*, that suffering is not meritorious, and could not avail for mankind. *Sixthly*, that the atonement does not extend to all.

No reason but *love* existed, why God should deliver up his Son for us all. The honor of the Divine government might have been secured in our destruction. The throne of God could have been reached by no disaster or misfortune, had he determined on not sending his Son. How dear, how indissoluble the fellowship existing between the Father and the Son! Again, how familiar the eternal intercourse between the Father and the Son! *One* in nature and concert of operations, though *two* in person. Observe the worth of the Son—his dignity—his residence—his glory in heaven! How natural—how reasonable, that he should continue there for

ever! But our necessity seems to have produced something like disorder in heaven. That is, the natural fitness of things seems not to have been consulted, when man was to be redeemed. God seems to have ceased his attentions to the celestial world, to secure the happiness and affections of our fallen family.

We now call attention, briefly, to some of the OBJECTIONS to the gospel plan of the manifestation of God's love to us through his Son.

That man is totally depraved and unholy, and consequently, needs salvation and recovery, is a truth now sanctioned by the almost universal consent of ages and nations. It is useless to debate it. In this condition man needs help in order to happiness. That God could pass by rebellion, without punishing it, is a position involving, not only an impeachment of the Divine holiness and justice, but also the Divine goodness. The punishment of sin, and the removal of the sinner to a place of condign retribution, were necessary to the preservation of order throughout the Divine kingdom, for the security of which object the holiness, justice, and goodness of God stood pledged. Hence, sin must be punished in the person of the sinner, or that of his proxy or surety. Man cannot render his own atonement. He had no availing sacrifice. All he *could* offer was contrition for the past, and obedience in the future. His contrition could not repair the injuries of antecedent rebellion; and obedience in future could have no retrospective, or *ex post facto* bearing. Perpetual, present obedience could only meet the perpetual, present demands of law and duty. Present obedience could no more atone for former delinquency, than former obedience could atone for future transgression.

Again, it is objected, that innocence cannot, by the order of justice, suffer for the guilty. This objection, applied to the sufferings of Christ, is fallacious. Had he been a mere

man, and his sufferings imposed and involuntary, so far as we can see, it could not have been an act of justice. But in the first place, Christ was God, as well as man; he could do with his own life as he pleased. Secondly, his sufferings were perfectly voluntary. Thirdly, Christ, as our sacrifice and surety, became responsible for the sins of men, by imputation. By his own stipulation and consent, our sins were laid upon him, as our sin-offering; that is, the punishment due to our sins. Hence, the innocent suffers for the guilty, and justice is cleared of all blame. The transfer was legal. It was a transaction of government, and this secures the indemnification of justice.

It is objected, that suffering is not meritorious. By merit, in this case, we mean a consideration accepted in the room of the blood or soul of the sinner, at the same time that the sinner is admitted to favor with Heaven, in view of the atonement rendered. The efficacy of Christ's death depends solely, or at least mainly, upon the Divine views and plans. It seems that this, with Heaven, was the only remedy—the only atonement. And resolving the efficacy of the means into the wisdom and authority of the appointment, the whole is consistent and credible; and we see the sufferings of Christ infinitely meritorious.

The last objection is founded upon a bare assumption. Who can prove that the influence of redemption is confined to our planet? May not the inhabitants of other planets be furnished with its history? May it not be known among the myriads of intelligent creatures inhabiting the unnumbered worlds, existing throughout the tracts of infinity and territories of space, that Jesus Christ died for the sins of men upon our planet, and had there been a race of sinners upon another planet, who had sinned under the circumstances we did, the same goodness would have prompted him to die for them also. But though he did not die for these, they being sinless, has he not even among all of them, thrown a new illustration over



the Divine character? Has he not furnished them with new arguments and new motives to rejoice in his goodness, and lift up his praises? Hence we read, that "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known the manifold wisdom of God." And angels in heaven rejoice over a sinner reclaimed.

III. *The OBJECT or END contemplated in this manifestation of the love of God.*

1. To satisfy the claims of justice, by making atonement for human guilt.
2. To open up a new and living way to heaven.
3. To furnish man with grace and its means.
4. To save from sin and hell, and bring to heaven.—For these purposes, God sent his Son. \* \* \* \* \*

IV *The MEANS necessary to a participation in the benefits of the death of Christ.*

*Repentance, faith and obedience.*—These are the terms of the new covenant—the only condition of reconciliation and life with God. *Repent, believe, and obey.* Hence the provisional language of the text, expressing contingency, and indicating a fearful conditionality of covenant terms:—"that whosoever believeth." Faith is the great hinge on which the door of heaven turns: and faith, in its train, takes every other virtue with it. Faith, or the want of it, infuses heaven into your hopes, or hell into your fears.

Shipwrecked upon the ocean of life, repentance is the only plank to which you can cling. This will save you from sinking, until faith in the blood of atonement, shall rescue you from the storm of Divine wrath; and your obedience shall publish to the world, that your feet are upon the Rock of ages.

V *The OBLIGATIONS arising from God's love to us.*

1. We are to love God *supremely*. Supreme love to God

is our duty. Love to him is to have the complete and prevalent mastery over the powers and passions of the soul. Every affection is to be elevated to things above. Superior to the dross and feculence of every thing earthly, the best feelings of the heart are to be placed upon our heavenly treasure, and permanently enfibred to the throne of God. There is to be in the heart, a dethronement of every idol erecting itself into a profane competition with the supremacy of moral claims and moral obligation. The heart, as a residence of the Spirit and altar of piety, must be kept pure as the cherubim of the Temple—holy as the oracle of Testimony. God without a rival, must have the heart, the mind, the soul—there must be the surrender of every vice—the subjugation of every principle of disloyalty. There must be within, a principle of inquiring allegiance—of willing sacrifice and ready devotion. We must walk with God on earth, until we can walk with him “high in salvation, and the climes of bliss.” We should love God in prosperity and adversity. In doing, and in suffering his will—when he gives, and when he withholds—when we walk in the light of his countenance, and when he dwells in darkness, and we in trial.

We should love him also with grateful and joyful hearts. We should “praise him for his mighty acts”—“praise him according to his excellent greatness.” We should “love him, because he first loved us.” We should “praise the Lord for his wonderful works, and for his goodness to the children of men.”—This lays the foundation for love to God. This constitutes the subject-matter of our gratitude and praise; and is the theme upon which our religious affections dwell. This facilitates the duty of according to God our supreme regard.

2. We are under obligations to love our fellow-men.

A question arises here—*how* are we to love others? The Saviour gives the answer.—“As I have loved you, so should

ye love one another." Attend we then to the model—God's love.

*First*, it was *pure* and *disinterested* in its *motives*. It was pure, without the alloy of insincerity—ignoble feeling, or unworthy purpose. It was disinterested. Our salvation could be of no positive or relative advantage to him. We could render him nothing that would enhance his essential glory or happiness. He saw, in our recovery, no personal aggrandizement—it was our good, and his glory as the God of mercy, "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." He was moved, by the impulse of his own benevolent nature, to do for us what he did. At the same time, the death of Christ is to be viewed as a demonstration of God's abhorrence of sin. It is to be looked upon as an equally decisive demonstration of his compassion and tenderness toward the world. In this eventful transaction, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, met together, in order to save the sinner, in the destruction of his sins, by a deed of expiation.

The whole work of redemption redounds to the triumph of mercy. It is not the simple exercise of spontaneous tenderness, that makes so high an exhibition of the character of God in the gospel, but mercy forcing its way through restraints and difficulties. There is no lessening of the Divine character—no compromise—no surrender—no invasion of his attributes—no letting down of the empire, and absolute perfection of Jehovah. The whole weight of the vindication of each aggrieved attribute, was laid upon our Surety; and from the cross of agony where he suffered, the justice of the Eternal sends forth a brighter and a nobler radiance of vindicated majesty, than if the minister of vengeance had gone forth and wreaked the sentence of damnation on every son and daughter of fallen humanity!

*Secondly*, the love of God to us, was *infinite* in its *compre-*

*hension.* It extends to all—it provides for all. All were originally interested in the covenant grant of his promise.—Its principles are catholic—its provisions irrespective and impartial. The whole of this world's territory—the entire of its population, were affected by the death of Christ. None are excluded—all are significantly comprehended. He is equally the Saviour of all men, upon original and first principles; especially the Saviour of them that believe. This covenant grant of the Divine promise, comprehended all the persons, and embraced all the wants of human kind. It was adequate to every wish, and every exigence of our fallen nature—coeval and coëxtensive with our need of it.

*Thirdly*, the love of God to us was *intense* in its *energies*. No obstacle could discourage—no difficulties embarrass—no cost, no pains, no amount of labor or expense, could operate to dissuade. Maugre a thousand intervening obstructions, God accomplished the plan of our recovery. The system of nature had to be thwarted—the laws of the mingled elements cancelled—water renounced its properties of drowning—fire ceased to burn—the Nile became blood—the dust of the earth became a world of the most abhorred vermin—the waters of the sea, affrighted, left their bed at Heaven's bidding—the iron and the steel possessed the properties of the buoyant cork, and floated, forsooth, upon the surface of the waters! The lame leaped with agility—the dumb sang with melody—leprosy was baffled—sins were forgiven—the dead were raised—the sea ceased its rage and roaring—a fish furnished the Redeemer with money to meet the demands of imposed taxation—bread was created in the mouth of the eater—light was found upon the new-opening eyes of the blind-born gazer!

Attend to the several dispensations of his love—the darkness of the *first*—the superstition of the *second*—and the infidelity of the *third*. To counteract the influence of this darkness, superstition and infidelity, a long chain of miracles

—of extraordinary occurrences was necessary. This was foreseen. Witness the illustration in the promise to Adam—the faith and sacrifice of Abel—the heavenly walk, and triumphant translation of Enoch—the believing obedience of Noah—the faith of Abraham—the meekness and miracles of Moses and Joshua—the translation of Elijah—The case of Elisha—the Hebrew children—and of Daniel.

But above all, look at the wonders clustering around the history of the Saviour!—His stoop from heaven to earth—he sojourned under the roof that canopies our strayed and solitary world, that he might descend to the lot and labors of poverty! Look at the wonders of his mighty hand! He changes the water to wine—he heals the bloody issue—the paralytic—he raises Lazarus. See him feeding the thousands in the wilderness—calming the sea—giving sight to the blind, and life to the dead! Look at his death, his resurrection, his ascension! But notwithstanding supernatural means were held in imperative requisition, in order to man's salvation, yet such means were not declined. Although every wind and element seemed to oppose it, yet "his own arm brought salvation."—The recall of his family was never forgotten!

*Fourthly*, The love of God was *constant* in its *operations*. How unremitting was Heaven's love and care! Many rebellions were multiplied on the part of man—even without number—beyond all reckoning. Crimes of the first magnitude were committed, and repeated in the face of Heaven's constant preparations to fit man for the service of his God, and the enjoyment of his love and fellowship. Yet God ceased not his operations to make men happy. Every difficulty was made superable—every obstacle rolled out of the way—the valleys were exalted, and the hills made low—the crooked became straight, and the rough places smooth! God had conceived the plan of our recovery, and his heart was bent upon its successful, *final* consummation.

And as justice and holiness have suffered no encroachment, in the arrangement of Heaven's plan, so the mercy of God is restrained by no limitation. It is arrested by no question about the shades, the degrees, and the varieties of crime. It stops at no point in the descending scale of depravity. The field for its invitations is the world; and in the full confidence of a warranted and universal commission, the messengers of grace go forth, and lay the free offer of acceptance at the door of every family, and every individual of the species.

If we, therefore, copy after Christ, we must love one another as he hath loved us. Our love to others must be disinterested, unlimited, intense, and constant. We must love them, because thereby we may save them. We must embrace *all*, and *all means*. We must not be discouraged. We must never relax, but persevere until the great object is accomplished. So says Jesus Christ, and so say *we*.

*First*, let your charity commence at home; and then enlarge the sphere of its operations. Begin with individuals, and extend the moral play of kindly feeling, and the hand of generous aid, to communities and nations. Look at the condition of the heathen in general. They need, and must have the light of science, and the illumination of religion. Their condition and misery implore you—be not unfeeling. Look at the Jews, and give back to them a religion, the original of which, they once gave to you. And as we have descended to the notice of particular cases, is there any reason why we should not sympathize with nations as well as individuals?—why we should overlook the unfortunate and neglected Greeks, in their struggles for civil and religious liberty? To them we owe the light of science and the glory of letters. From them, originally, we have whatever is valuable, in every department of literature and improvement. What would have been our knowledge of antiquity, if Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus had never written? Who would have known the acts of

Achilles had Homer never sung? But no more. The feelings we wish to produce must already thrill in every breast. Extend then your aid—do all in your power to bring in perpetual oblivion the accursed crescent of the Ottoman, and sink in undistinguished ruin, that system of Turkish tyranny and hellish intolerance, which now extends from Bagdad to Belgrade! This would prepare the way for the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and facilitate the views of prophecy in the grand achievement of the world's conversion.

Similar sympathies must be indulged in relation to Spain, now fallen and depressed. The fact is, the allied powers—the despotic confederations of Europe, have long set their faces against every country and people, who have manifested the least unwillingness to sacrifice their rights to the inclinations of a crowned despot, and his court of imperial intriguers; and the best of them would glory in giving vigor and action to the canker-worm of despotism, at the root of the tree of American liberty. And in so far as we are careless and unconcerned, in relation to those junior republics, and nations and countries striving to become such, in so far, we neglect ourselves. Let these imperial coalitions acquire sufficient strength, and find opportunity, and then the temple of your freedom crumbles!

But to return,—the religion of the Bible is destined to prevail, coëxtensive with human kind. But you must recollect that God has ordained, that one man shall be blessed by another—that one man and one nation shall minister to the good of another. The amelioration of the depressed and unhappy race of Adam's children, and the grand evangelization of the whole world, are to be effected by *means*, and not by *miracles*. You, my brethren, are the instruments of this great work; and hence it is, we wish you to identify yourselves with the God of mankind, in spreading happiness around you, and banishing misery from before you, until the world shall be

converted to God, and the raptures of devotion shall be kindled upon the altars of a thousand nations! Such shall be the success of the gospel, until heaven is filled with inhabitants!

Of the joys of heaven, and the glories of the celestial world, we can say but little. It would require the glowing eloquence of angelic natures, and the refined powers of immortality, to give you any adequate idea of that eternal weight of enjoyment, reserved in heaven for the good. Thought and language fail us, and our comprehension sits down in despair, when the palace and throne of God break in upon our vision—that palace lighted up by the refulgent splendors of Godhead, and that throne, from beneath which the rivers of salvation interminably issue, while *above* and *about*, overshadowing the millions of the redeemed, the trees of eternity bend their ambrosial tops in verdant stillness for ever!



## S E R M O N   X I

## T H E   P R O D I G A L   S O N

“I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee.”—LUKE xv. 18.

THERE is but one object in the universe that can fill the grasp of man's illimitable faculties; and that object is **but** little known and little regarded. We are no sooner **familiar**-ized, than we become dissatisfied with our choicest blessings; and we cast them from us, as children their baubles. The ordinary privileges of life—the enjoyment of health—the bounties of providence—the endearments of friendship—of the social circle or the sacred hour—the light of heaven—the ambient atmosphere—the liberty of counsel and action, **are** none of them regarded as they should be. But if judgments, like whirlwinds, desolate our path—if sickness—if fever flame through the trembling nerves of man, and boil along his veins—if poverty arrest him with his cold and iron grasp—if he be exiled from his family, and all his heart holds dear—if prisons confine him amid perpetual vapors, then he “comes to **himself**,” and sighs over the happiness he has lost. Such was the Prodigal—such is man—such are we.

It is but too often the fortune of the pulpit, to recommend without success, truths that are the beauty and enamel of the gospel. But as there is no **royal way** to geometry, so there is none to truth. There is but *one*, and that is the “**good old way**”—“To the law and the testimony.” The want of **success of** which we complain, is owing to the well-attested fact,

that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" also, the "carnal," or natural mind, is "enmity against God." He trampled on God's commands before his face, and profaned the sanctity of his first abode. His holiness imaged forth the purity of heaven, his happiness its felicity, and his dominion its sovereignty. The investments of his dignity, crowned him God's lieutenant here below. Originally, sin was the fault of our *will*, not of our *nature*. Now, it appears to be the fault of both. The crimes of men, in every age, have multiplied with their numbers. The sin of Adam made guilty all his sons; and they have industriously added to the original stock.

We learn from the parable, *first*, that we have wandered from God without provocation. Look at man's original condition, dignity and happiness. He surrendered the principle of his allegiance, cast off the favor of his God, and hid from himself the blessings and the protection of Heaven, without cause, just reason, or provocation. Our great progenitor sinned, without even the plea of deception; and the mother of nations tarnished the glory of our nature, from no stronger impulse than that of sheer curiosity. Their posterity have become a community of practical Atheists, with still less plausible pretexts. You have sinned against God in lip, life, and gesture—sins that have incurred infinite damnation. A perpetual, and unbroken series of dispensations has been made use of by Heaven, to reclaim us from our sins, ever since we were capable of reflection and choice; but still, we have persisted in wandering from God. Nothing seems to sate our appetite for crime, until disabled and disgusted nature is in a state of perfect impotency to commit sin—such have been our unprovoked wanderings from the God of Heaven. With an unhallowed propensity to set up for ourselves in matters of safety and happiness, we have pawned the prospects of heaven, and interred celestial hopes, without a sigh; and in this

situation, we are still found without hope and without God in the world. The home of our first parents was Eden,—the world was their inheritance, and the riches of Paradise lay open to their grasp. When under such circumstances they sinned, judgment awarded to them a desolation of the earth. When for one indulgence so paltry, they cast off subjection to the sway of the Eternal, and braved the fiercest of his lightnings, this single act severed the bonds that held heaven and earth together, and bound the hopes of the creature to the throne of God! The crime swells in its proportions and deepens in its hues, when we look at the slenderness of the temptation. Their intellectual attributes furnished an adumbration of the great Supreme. We need not tell you how the cunning fiend of hell got into the serpent, and framed his organs to a devilish use! Such was the fact. Man was thereby induced to sin, in consequence of which, curse and misery scathed the glories of creation, and ingulfed its newborn joys! What a warning spectacle have we before us!

Let us look at our common mother:—the passion of novelty—the whirl of curiosity—ambitious vanity—a love of the grand—a taste for the magnificent; *these* transformed the loveliest of God's creation into an Atheist! Look at Adam! He was not deceived—Eve had sinned, and he rashly resolved to perish with her. The witchcraft of ensnaring fondness transferred his affections from the Creator to the creature. He surrendered his loyalty to Heaven, and identified his fortunes with the fate of his wife—"fair as the clouds of sunset, and as frail." This seems, viewed only in its social aspect, so much a deed of unutterable tenderness—of exalted fellow-feeling—an act of such heroic desperation, that were we governed by fancy instead of truth, we should almost imagine, that when the recording angel wrote the damning deed in his book, he dropped a tear of pity and regret, and half erased it ere it dried! But a truce to such feelings—"In the day thou

eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Such was the unfaltering language of Heaven ; and in a judgment of righteousness, such should be ours.

Thus it is, that mankind are now in a state of alienation from God ; and this parable applies to all mankind, in a state of unbelief and unregeneracy, before their return to God, and addresses them as the enemies of God—the alienated members of his family, displaying an atheism of sentiment and feeling—remote from him and his approving care—and still fugitive wanderers, pressing on with forward tread, prone in their career to hell—ruined beyond count, and conscience must fill up the indictment—they exhibit the scarlet, and the dye of crimson ! You are rapidly approximating a state of need and nakedness—a state of woful want and negation ! Man in his lapsed state, possesses a natural gravitation to the wrong. Bewildered among many a devious tract that leads from God and life, the voice of God falls powerless on the conscience. Every element of the mind is an element of fear and insecurity. You are far from and unlike God. Every feature and lineament of the Godhead is erased from the mind, once the fair transcript that imaged forth all his communicable perfections. Now, it is a storehouse of every vain and evil thought. It is a guilty scroll, on which is legibly inscribed the counsel of the ungodly, and the way of the sinner. And is it possible, that men, in spite of Heaven's preparations to bring them back to God, are at a more fearful and damning remove from him, aggregately, in the year of their redemption 1828, than ever they were before ! We fear it is but too true !

Your hearts, still bereft of that allegiance which forms the ruling principle of God's unfallen creation, are all estranged from peace and purity. In dreary alienation from your God, you are still influenced by the uncrucified temper of your fallen nature, in all its entireness—the subjects of present

guilt and future vengeance. The rebelliousness of your nature—the ingratitude and unfeeling impiety of your hearts—the crime and irreligiousness of your lives;—these all attest the fact of a moral, and long-continued disruption between God and your souls. In relation to God and religion, you have feelings of offensiveness and disgust—even the most nauseous antipathy—God is to you (we speak of your unrenewed state) a loathing and an abomination. Hence the truth we allege.

You are wasting those goods, a right use of which alone, can make you meet for heaven. By these goods, we understand those blessings and privileges, intended for the weal of this life, and the glory of the next. These you neglect, abuse, and throw away; and yet these alone can make you happy either in this or the coming world! Such is the ordination of God—the constitution of eternity!

You do not think, read, hear, pray—you do not watch, abstain, and flee to Christ in the use of the means of grace, as from a coming storm. You waste time, talent, instruction—resist grace, and will not submit yourself to the “righteousness of God.” Recollect, *these* are your *portion*. You may get no more. You are closing your eyes against the light of Heaven. You are annulling your claim to the mercy of God. You are setting up for yourselves; and the fruit of this self-sufficiency will be, the *husks* of vanity—the glory of swine! You are undermining all the securities of human hope and human happiness; and you will shortly sigh for these goods again, when worlds will want wealth to buy. You feel secure in the possession now, but the time is approaching, when on your last bed you will toss and writhe like the stricken whale, notwithstanding your vain boasting in health and prosperity. A single breath called you into being, and another will consign you to the dust. Awake then to a sense of impending ruin, before the shades of death close upon you for ever!

The splendid vanities that cross your path, are but the me-

tears of a moment—one single ray of light athwart the conscience, will silence the voice of inconsideration, and chill you with a feeling of insecurity. Look at the dreadful furniture of vengeance—the awful inflexibility of truth and righteousness! We would spread out an undone eternity before you, and tell you of dreary abodes where every solitary criminal has his bed in hell, and where the centuries of despair that pass over them are never counted, because there no seasons roll to count the periods of their pain, or cast up the calculations of despair! Termless, measureless eternity is the only limit of their sorrow! Would to God we had for a moment a tongue of archangelic skill, dipped in celestial bitterness, tinged with the gall of the damned, and barbed with the pains of hell, that we might adequately—that we might vividly paint the ruin of a human soul, wrecked in all the lofty elements of being, upon eternity's dark and viewless strand! On account of these things, it becomes our duty to lift a warning voice, and sound the note of preparation. We have to unfold the criminal roll of heaven, read you the categories of your condemnation, and point you to the terrors of a judgment day in all their angry majesty!

There is a day of want and adversity at hand. This applies to the afflictions and sorrows of life, the approach and ravages of death, the coming judgment, the dreadful rewards of vice, and fearful retributions of eternity. A child of adversity without a covering from the storm—a sick, a dying man, without a God to look to, or a heaven to go to—a child of condemnation, trembling in the judgment, amid the thunder's increasing roar, and the lightning's lurid glare!—a criminal looking for his hell, and fearing the pursuit of vengeance there! and finally, a ruined spirit, gazing with blasted eye athwart the fiery pit, immortal in his crimes, and in his folly damned! This, we are obliged to publish in your hearing, and thunder it in all the majesty of our mission!

You will want time; peace of conscience; the favor of God; the light of his countenance; the hope of his mercy; and redemption from a threatening hell. Your return *may* be timely; but you may seek it when it is too late! Hence, religion is as important, as immortality is durable; momentous, as the redemption of the soul is precious. When religion shall withdraw her light, and hope her solace, what will you have then to lighten the horror of hell, or melodize the groans of the damned! Then, the solitary privilege of your being will be moral suffering! You will have given the finish of provocation to your crimes! *Now*, Heaven suspends the blow of his vengeance, and lets fall the drops of paternal correction—*then*, he will recall his mercy, and vengeance, unmixed, will deal to each his doom! Look at the deep mantle of despair spread over the vast field of eternity! Look at the grim aspect of impending doom; the urgency of coming wrath; the bitterness of remorse; the anticipations of vengeance; the corrosions of that undying worm, and the fury of those quenchless flames that shall corrode and consume him for ever!

There must be a return to God, ere you can be happy. You are now in exile from him. Never was the sainted John more truly expatriated from his country and friends, than are you from the God of all goodness and his family. He is the object, source, support, and completion of happiness: and ere you can be happy, you must repair to his mercy-seat, and seek his forfeited favor. You must check your wanderings, and call yourselves back to his throne and his love, by repentance, faith, and obedience. The distance—the intervening moral space between you and your Father is great. You must lose no time—neglect no possible means; your present condition is one of fatal insecurity; every moment is big with disaster, and teems with destiny; the earth breaks under your feet, and the heavens roar about your head. This implies a sight of sin, a sense of danger, a broken heart, and a flight to the

mercy-seat of God. Are you not in the chase of satisfaction? If reason could not sustain man when he stood, how can it raise him when fallen? As well might you make a splendid palace spring from the stony bowels of the earth! On earth's poor pay our famished virtue dies. Repentance must be attended to in time, ere vengeance shall strike the damned, and no mercy avert the blow. O, hasten to the mercy-seat! His thunders slumber there! Cast from you *now* the criminal suggestions of hell; fix your attention on the solemnities of the last tribunal, and decide with the prodigal, that your choice shall be the forfeited friendship of your long-neglected Father! Then the gospel will spread its salutary and composing charm over that dark scene of conflict that stirred within you!

Repentance is the glory of the Christian dispensation—the high felicity of the Gentile world. It should follow the steps of every missionary, and attend the opening of every Bible. Jesus Christ has borne the burden of offended justice. In his own body on the tree, he bore the weight of those mighty accomplishments, by which it behooved Almighty Justice to be glorified. He has levelled the wall of partition that lay across the path of acceptance, and God can now, with untarnished glory, dispense the blessings of forgiveness over the whole extent of a guilty creation. God, in his new aspect as reconciled in Christ, is disrobed of his severity, and tenderly invites the offender to acceptance. Nor is his government, in this, despoiled of its authority; nor has any single utterance of his, failed of its accomplishment. The burden of their ample vindication was laid on Jesus Christ. *He*, our illustrious substitute, in the day of his mysterious agony, drank to the very dregs the cup of our expiation. The wrath that would have ruined guilty millions in its fearful infliction, fell on him as our Surety. Without stripping his throne of a single attribute that sustained it, he pours the



expression of his tenderness, with an unsparing hand, over all the world; and the broad flag of invitation is unfurled in the sight of all its families. He tenders you the mild and generous announcement,—“Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth!” He feels for you the longing of a Father bereaved of his children; and with imploring tenderness, invites you to himself!

However strong your vicious propensities may be, they must be restrained, and you must resolve with the Prodigal, “I will arise and go to my Father.” Whatever may be the power of choice, the impulse of appetite, or the aptitude to crime, you must pause,—come to yourselves—forswear your purposes—renounce folly—and be for God. In the strength of him who calls, you must arise and go to your Father. Now is the time for decision. “Choose ye, this day, whom ye will serve.” *You* quote your impious and sinful inclinations; and against these in the scale, we would weigh the awful chances of heaven and hell! One breath of ecstasy in heaven, will more than compensate you for all the pains of self-denial; and one hour’s sufferance of the pains and penalties of the damned,—one draught of the wormwood and gall of hell, would make you sigh for the sight of your Father’s house, and regret your every crime! Seek for Heaven-excited and the ascending passions. Like John’s book, sin may be sweet in the mouth, but the bitterness of digestion will follow. Year follows year into the presence of God, with the record of your obduracy, and the prophecy of your ruin. Honor Jesus Christ, we beseech you, with your sighs and tears, and magnify his gospel, by conforming to it. In your present condition, life is a burden, and earth a hell. Cast yourselves at the feet of Christ, and pray that repentance may lay your hearts *there*! Rise up to the work of obedience, and let your love for your Father—for your elder Brother, hasten your steps! Christ has died for you. The fragrance

of his sacrifice fills the land of glory—the merits of his death mingle with the splendors of his throne—the mercy-seat is sprinkled with his blood—*His* tears purchased *your* consolation—*his* groans, *your* quiet—your names sparkle on his breastplate, and the sorrows of Calvary rise in memorial before God, and plead for your acceptance!

You must confess your sins, deeply and penitently bewailing their number and malignity. Thus confessing, God will hear, pity, and forgive you. Your tears, and prayers, and groans shall rise in grateful exhalation to the throne of God; and he will hasten to repair the injuries of your rebellion and folly, and receive you to himself. If sick of sin, relent, He will write your name in heaven. You have sinned without reason—you have indulged in every variety of crime—your sins are “high as heaven, what can you do? deep as hell, what can you know?” “wider than the earth, and broader than the sea,” which way can you turn? The pathway to your Father’s house is the only vista that opens. Go to Heaven and say, “I have sinned.” He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy. Betake yourselves, then, to this sin-confessing, sin-forsaking process; and he will show himself “faithful and just to forgive.” The grace of repentance will subdue the most reckless and hardhearted—even the “man without a tear!”

You must forsake ALL your sins. The sins of the mind, the heart, and the life. This must be done immediately, resolutely, unreservedly, and perseveringly. Your infidel pride of understanding—your ever-increasing corruption and depravity—the crime and irreligion of your every-day walk and character. Your sins must be broken off—must be repudiated and put far from you—you must flee them as you would the face of a serpent, the tread of banditti, or the mouth of hell—flee your youthful passions, and your hoary

lusts, and turn to God! But the way to break off sins is by righteousness. Cease then to do evil, and learn to do well.

The only expulsive power in the case of bad habits, is new affections—supplant the old man with his deeds, and give place to the new, with all the redeeming energies of vital piety and saving faith. No reformation is positively—is sincerely intended until it is begun; and no reformation is begun, without a fixed determination to persist in it. It is almost as difficult to reform the natural man, as to change the hue of the Ethiopian or the spots of the leopard. He who rules his own spirit, is a greater hero than is to be found among all the masters of thrones, from Nimrod down to those of the holy Alliance. May your souls be ready for heaven as soon as your bodies are for the grave! And when one sinks, may the other rise!

If you *now* forsake your sins, God will forgive them, and restore to you the forfeited inheritance. He will remember your sins no more. All he has shall be yours—the dead shall live, and the lost shall wander no more! The attributes of God shall form a canopy of defence about you—he will look upon you with a smile that would make heaven gay, and his creation leap for joy—he will hasten to embrace you, like the “father” in this parable. He will cut short the tale of your penitence in the sweets of forgiveness, and the honors of promotion. You shall become “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.” The treasures of his house and glories of his throne shall be yours. You shall share the embrace, and inherit the wealth of his family. Your interests shall be identified with his, and your felicity run parallel with the unsuccessive—unending years of his being! The wretchedness of your captivity will illustrate the glory of your redemption. You shall be cherished in his family, and lean on the bosom

of your once offended Father, in full and unrepining fondness. He will meet you with pity's mildest gleam—affection's sweetest smile.

Will you not then, renounce the lunacy of vice—come to yourselves, and prove that you are sane, by living worthy of yourselves? May God help us all to do so! Heaven wept for you the midnight prayer, and waits to answer yours. Go to him in the language of the text—he will meet you, and the cadence of his every accent will vibrate delight through your soul. The great, the secret tear begems his radiant throne! Then let hope in your bosom beat ardent and high! Death shall approach you stingless and disarmed—you shall hold communion on the bed of death, in sacred stillness, or in vocal intercourse with Heaven—you shall indulge in the feelings and the hymns of gratitude and triumph!

*Finally*, we urge you to an early imitation of the Prodigal, in his timely return to God.—It is matter of duty—of interest—of principle—necessity—destiny. Heaven calls—earth warns—hell alarms—men woo—angels beckon—and even devils wave the beacon of impending danger about the gates of hell! God requires it. So does your own happiness. If you do not yield, you rob Heaven of the rights of justice and mercy. You perish unless you do. Do it soon, or it may be too late! If you do it not, Omniscience and Omnipotence will circumvent and entoil you! When the thunders of Heaven shall urge the challenge home, and the avenging fires that flash from forth the throne, shed on your deeds their pale but piercing ray—children of crime! can you bear to be damned! Will you *revel* on earth, and *writh*e in hell! Will you forget God here, that he may forget you hereafter! or only remember you in the pitiless inflictions of his wrath! God of the Prodigal, have mercy on you, and lead you to your Father's house!

But consent to imitate the Prodigal, and we felicitate you

on your reādmision into your Father's family. This implies conviction for sin, and your return to God, and adoption into the household of faith and family of Heaven. An event, for the achievement of which, Heaven and earth have labored so long, will gladden the heart of God, enkindle the gratitude of man, increase the joy of angels, and circulate the acclamation amid the worshippers of eternity—"the dead is alive—the lost is found!"

## SERMON XII.

## INCONSIDERATION

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider.”  
—ISA. i. 2, 3.

THE charge in the text is brought against the Church. It is a charge of *inconsideration*; and applies both to the true believer, and the merely nominal Christian—the baptized sinners—those who have a name to live, and are *dead*. The Church of God upon earth, is properly divisible into these two great distinguishable classes. The charge of inconsideration brought against the ancient Church, will lie, in different degrees, and in a variety of ways, against the Church in the present day.

I. *First*, we apply this charge to the *true believer*. So, we often see true believers indulging in actual sins—yielding to gratifications, the allowableness of which, is doubtful; if they be not expressly forbidden. Practices that are traitors to their peace, and in sworn league with temptation. While this state of things continues, their success will be various. Alternate triumph and defeat will characterize the spiritual warfare. Reprehensively indolent and negligent, in the great concerns of their salvation, this negligence is in a great measure owing to their inconsideration. A heaven-enlightened spirit is busied with trifles. Such characters become earthly-minded. They become content with negative virtues;

and this accounts for the paucity and defectiveness of their attainments. Their piety and virtue are stationary. They are "at ease in Zion." They are settled "upon their lees." They neglect those evangelical statutes that require positive good. They may avoid the marked evil of the earthly-minded multitude, but are not supremely intent upon the "one thing needful." They are ardent in the pursuit of any thing, rather than religion—any thing but the claims of Heaven have an audience, and receive toleration—share their devotion, and exhaust their ardor. Indevout in temper, and languid and spiritless in conduct,—this indevotion of temper—apathy of feeling, and languor and indecision of action, are all owing to the want of proper reflection upon the number and magnitude of the advantages secured to us, by the new and everlasting covenant, and upon the great danger of neglect. It seems to be the design of God, that contemplation should give fresh vigor to our heaven-excited and heaven-ascending passions and affections. Meditate upon these things. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." "While I mused, the fire burned;" and forthwith utterance was given to his emotions. This internal remissness leads to external laxity of habit: and deprives you of much of the pleasantness and peacefulness of wisdom's ways. Certainly naught but inconsideration could render you languid and inert, knowing as you do, that a life of religion is to end in an immortality of joy. The fruitful source of all infidelity, in speculation and practice, is the want of devout and earnest reflection.

We are frequently found retreating before the assaults of adversity. Habits of consideration should always discipline our virtue. Naught in this world can fill the ever-aching, but never-satisfied soul of man. Let adversity, therefore, remove these things. Our afflictions, in a measure, meet us stingless and disarmed. It is through tribulation we are to

enter into rest ; and therefore, we should glory in it. You must not allow yourselves to be wedded to the love of temporal good. You must not timidly shrink from contact with misfortune and adversity. Bear in mind the essential mutability, and perpetual fluctuation of things seen ; and let not the want or the loss of them, throw you into inordinate agitation. Let the heart be the seat of contentment, and the Rock of ages the place of your feet ; then light will arise in darkness, sunshine will gild your heavens, and flowers will strew your path.

You are often actuated by an ignorant, immoderate zeal. What pitiable ravages have been seen in the various sections of the heritage of God, owing to blind, misguided zeal—to irritable zealots, and acrimonious controversy ! Caution and deliberation should precede the adoption of religious opinions ; and brotherly kindness should qualify the expression of them. Immoderate zeal is religious frenzy. Zeal, duly chastened and regulated, is useful and commendable ; but it should always be subject to the superior law of charity. Zeal, not according to knowledge, is usually the madness of hasty feeling. An illiberal zealot, in the eyes of the judicious and discerning, will always be an object of pity and contempt. It was this that gave birth to Papal intolerance ; to the murderous crusades, and the tortures of the inquisition. It was this that transformed the churches of Europe into slaughter-houses ; and led even the Pilgrims of New England, to burn Quakers in the name of God ! God speed the time when the world shall be purged of bigots and zealots !

*Finally*, professors of religion are often found sinking into dejection and impatience, dishonorable to religion. Why should he who has avouched the Lord to be his God, and who is an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, be habitually gloomy and melancholy ? Every human being will have moments of dejection ; but these should not be indulged



in, to the extent that will endanger Christian cheerfulness and activity. Dejection tends to enervate the mind; and argues a want of confidence and resignation. In making these remarks, we do not intend to tolerate or connive at levity. We would have you cheerful, because as Christians, you should possess a good conscience—"a grateful heart, and without guilt be gay." Different professing Christians run into extremes on this subject. Both these extremes, we wish you to avoid. We would not have you to go bowed down, haggard and squally, like a Franciscan friar, or a bare-footed Carmelite; and on the other hand, we would not have you dancing the airs of hell one night, and mocking Heaven by singing hymns the next. We appeal to your own good sense, corrupted as it may be by these painted vices,—these splendid sins, how would you like to be removed from one of these graceless scenes of dissipation, to the bar of God? Can you do these things in the name of Jesus Christ, and to the glory of God? Are they of faith? If not, they are sin. Would the inhabitants of heaven act thus? But we disgrace you by asking the question!

Let the dejected and disconsolate remember that they dwell beneath the paternal wings, and share the protection of the Almighty! Let memory be ever faithful to the deeds of his mercy and condescension in bringing many sons to glory. Reflect that it is not less the tendency than the design of religion, to make you happy. Let no atmosphere of forbidding gloom, therefore, gather around you; but trust in God with cheerful seriousness, and look forward to a better life to come. Though we are confidently assured, that religion never was designed to make our comforts less, we are equally certain, at the same time, that it contemplates the excision of every vice.

II. In the next place, we apply this charge to *merely*

*nominal Christians.* If from improper views they do not seek after God, they forget that the threatenings of his tribunal are like the promises of his mercy-seat, sure of accomplishment. They reflect not upon God's essential disapprobation of moral evil, and his fixed determination to avenge his violated law, in every unrepented instance. They do not seek to form their opinions upon the basis of Heaven's instructions. They consult their own constitutional vices and gratification, more than the will and law of Heaven. That this class of professing Christians are inconsiderate, to a deplorable extent, and in a very conspicuous degree, must be obvious to every one. With them, the character and claims of Heaven are not received into the bosom of serious consideration. God and heaven are precluded from the high places of the understanding and the heart.

These merely nominal Christians do not reflect upon the end of their being.—That their chief good is to be found in communion with God, and that such communion is fundamentally connected with human salvation. They forget that to reign with Christ, we must suffer with him. They rather prefer reigning here, and suffering hereafter. They lose sight of the true felicity of their nature. Religion, with them, is a polite ceremony, or an exercise of sagacious ingenuity. The exalted designs of Heaven, in their original formation and superior destination, they industriously forget. They dismiss from themselves the unwelcome conviction, that the chief good of our rational nature is only to be enjoyed in the bosom and family of the eternal Parent of all. Their being's end and aim are displaced from their preëminence in the scale of morality; and passion, the glory of a brute, reigns lord of the ascendant.

Such professing Christians are forgetful and ungrateful. What tongue or pen can count up the mercies of God's throne? What power of calculation would not be left behind by those

compassions that never fail! Shameful inconsideration! **that** persons in visible covenant with God, should repay him with the basest ingratitude; thereby rendering themselves more stupid than the most reasonless of animals—the unreflecting ox, and the soulless beast of burden, that loaded with gold, is content to browse the thistle! You stand reprov'd, therefore, by the dulness of the ox, and the stupidity of an animal proverbial for undiscerning instinct.

Again, such nominal Christians do not reflect on the nature and value of the Christian religion. They do not reflect that sin is forbidden—that holiness is enjoined, and that evangelical faith is invariably victorious over a tempting world—that this religion alone can shield the returning sinner from threatened wrath and coming vengeance—that the way of the transgressor, the end of the sinner, is an unblest grave, and a burning hell!—They think not of the everlasting abodes of sinless virtue—cloudless enjoyment, and unsullied, undying glory!—All these evils and many more, are assignable to inconsideration.

They do not reflect on the nature and tendency of their lives. They like not to examine themselves; for the result of such examination would be conscious guilt. It would demand the immediate dereliction of cherished iniquities—the divorce of the heart from all its idols; hence, they fall out with their consciences, and separate from them for the sake of peace. It afflicts them to anticipate consequences. They dread retrospection. Amid the din and bustle, and fascinating dissipations of the world, they banish sober thought, through fear of self-accusation.

The precarious tenure by which such professors hold their lives, is banished from their thoughts. They forget that their foundation, instead of being laid in a continuing city, walled in with everlasting adamant, is in the dust, and that the north shall eat them! They sing and dance, carouse and revel, on

the crumbling edge of damnation! They pursue the chase of sinful enjoyment, as though the visitation of Heaven's judgments—as though the spectral horrors of death, were never to overtake them; while, perhaps, the last glimmer of their lamp is flickering in its socket, soon to go out in eternal darkness!

They do not look upon eternal things in the light they should. The invisible recompenses of eternity are lost sight of. The abodes of the just and the habitations of the damned are not regarded with that contemplative faith and pious dread, that belong to real, to sincere Christianity. Things present and things to come, are not weighed in the scale of just and impartial inquiry. The momentous and ever-during interests of the eternal world are little regarded, and lightly passed over; and it is to be feared, too many will continue in their pernicious course, until hopelessly enfeoffed in eternal torture!

### III. THE EFFECT OF INCONSIDERATION.

*First*, it keeps those under its influence, in ignorance of those great points which alone concern them. He who "communes with his own heart," and whose "spirit maketh diligent search," is alone likely to become a proficient in the science of truth and duty. Such as neglect this, do not reflect that they are endued with reason, and gifted with immortality. They forget what is the chief part of their nature, and the chief period of their duration. The soul and eternity are laid aside.

*Secondly*, inconsideration deadens the moral sensibilities. It gives birth to heartless indifference—to unreflecting levity, and to the most seductive security; and that which began in apathy will end in death. With the mere nominalist, eternity's vast concerns are matters of indifference. He reflects not upon his final, dreadful account. Reason is no light,

revelation no guide, and the Bible a dead letter with him. He thinks but little on these things, and feels less.

*Thirdly*, inconsideration renders those under its influence criminally indifferent, in relation to the great concerns of their salvation. They think not of the perilous issues of unrepented vice. They hear not the voice of the Redeemer from the garden and the cross, on earth and in heaven. They progress from one degree of false security to another, until finally, the susceptibilities of conscience, which for a time were only dormant, have now become extinct; and this unfortunate temper of inconsideration, must eventuate in shame, and end in perdition! Inconsideration reduces its subjects to the dominion of every unholy passion. Every lust is a tyrant, and every vicious habit is slavery. They boast that they are free, but it is only a freedom from the salutary restraints of piety. It is not the liberty of the children of God. They have not been graciously enfranchised by Jesus Christ; and so made "free indeed." Such freedom as theirs, is slavery! It is bondage!

*Fourthly*, inconsideration gives victory to temptation. The avenues to the heart should be guarded by serious consideration. Temptation retires from a conflict with a man of thought and reflection. But for inconsideration, Adam had never sinned, nor angels fell. Heaven had never been lost, nor hell incurred. But for this, *we* should have been better, and our *neighbors* reformed. It is the ruin of earth, and the triumph of hell!

*Fifthly*, inconsideration induces men to build upon improper and deceptive foundations. Lies are their refuge, and they trust in lying vanity. They repose, even in the highway of profligacy and crime, upon the infinitude of God's mercy. The threatenings and comminations of Heaven are explained away. They live, as though death were an "eternal sleep," and heaven and hell were pleasant dreams'

*Finally*, inconsideration leads to procrastination, and ends in death. With the inconsiderate, the *sense* of gospel ministrations leaves the mind as soon as the *sound* does the ear; and the whole is postponed till a more convenient season. They prolong the period of reformation, till vice has fortified itself by a thousand auxiliaries. They trust in to-morrow's resolutions, and next year's repentance; and so, stake their eternal repose upon the probabilities of a deathbed conversion—problematical at best. Thus, you perceive, inconsideration is the parent of all crime. It is fearfully and formidably inimical to your best and highest interests; and tends, with the most rapid and resistless momentum, to the utter and everlasting ruin of the human soul!

To conclude, we invoke you to abjure inconsideration. It is a vice to which the Devil is, perhaps, more indebted than to any other. The sad tale of inconsideration, and the awful catastrophe of unthinking sin, if you will not hear us now, must be learned among the groans and miseries of the damned! The subject is unutterably important. It shall strike an influence through eternal ages. God Almighty grant, that when the dungeons of despair shall echo the dirge of the thousands slain by this vice, we may sit together in the mansions of immortal fruition, in the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God!

## SERMON XIII.

## ONE THING NEEDFUL.

“But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”—LUKE x. 42.

I. WE call your attention to the exclusive, and *infinite importance of the Christian religion*. That the language of the text has reference to the Christian religion, and nothing else, we take for granted, without the labor of formal proof. That our Lord, who was unceasingly in the habit of withholding a high estimate from this world's goods and treasures, should have applied the language of the text to any earthly attainment or perishing enjoyment, is to us *inconceivable*. All the circumstances of the case intimate with sufficient clearness, that he was calling the attention of his friends at Bethany, to some great and peculiar good, every way calculated to meet and fill the immortal longings of our anxious mind.

Man was created in the image of God, and crowned with his benediction. Nature, in her original purity, and providence, in the profusion of its bestowments, rendered him truly and essentially happy. But man's criminal inattention to the claims of his creation, and the dignity of his nature, subjected him to a defection that threw him off into exclusion from the favor and confidence of Heaven; and the great question *now* was, how to originate a method of return, and bond of fellowship, that would at once secure the indemnification of the throne of God, and the immortal weal—the final happiness of man.

Such a method and bond are proposed to our contemplation, in the Christian religion; and in no other system in the wide range of the universe. Hence, the exclusive and unutterable importance of revealed religion. It is the "*one thing needful*." It is properly a remedial constitution—a restorative dispensation. But alas! how much more devoted is man to the urgent varieties and interests of this life, than the solemn concerns of death, duty, and eternity! These only have a place in the background of his contemplation. They occupy a hidden, dormant recess of the heart; and are only allowed to influence the affections and shape the conduct, on some extraordinary occasion, or providential emergency. The design of our Lord is, to correct this evil; and direct human attention and attainment to a higher and more enduring substance. He takes in the whole of our being,—and connects life's narrow span with the everlasting future. For happiness *here*, he assures us, religion *alone* is necessary; and hence, asserts its boundless importance.

II. The Christian religion is *only* and *exclusively* important.—ONE thing is needful.

*First*, the Christian religion is *one* in its *design*. Christianity proposes to rescue man from his lapsed and miserable condition as a sinner, and invest him with glory and immortality.

*Secondly*, it proposes to him, through Jesus Christ, the heavenly Adam, an inheritance, infinitely more worthy his affection and confidence, than the primitive lot of his great progenitor—an inheritance coëxtensive with his wants, and imperishable as the heavens!

*Thirdly*. Christianity addresses itself to man upon the terms of his nature—she accosts him as a son of Adam; and therefore, a child of sorrow. She proposes restoring him to the dignity of the sons of God; and thereby turns his sorrow



into joy. Happiness is the grand object of her every proposition and lesson. She visits every human being with a message of kindness and encouragement.

*Fourthly.* Christianity is not the gloomy visitation of a despotic sovereign, who loves to display his property in, and authority over his creatures; but it is the gracious interference of a tender Father, to arrest the perdition of his children. Christianity is the outstretched arm of God to save a sinking world. It is a pathway from earth to the throne and pavilion of our reconciled Father and Friend in heaven! It is our being's *end* and *aim*—it is the goal of our wishes—the guerdon of our hopes.

1. *In its ORIGIN.*—It is remarkable that God is the only being in the universe, who has furnished any evidence of right or claim to father the origin, or husband the interests of Christianity. Angels abhor the treason—men cannot in reason institute the plea—and it would mar the fairest prospects of hell, were devils to indulge the dream. Religion begins—it arises and terminates in God. It originates in his benevolence, and concludes in his glory. It is the fruit of his goodness,—the offspring of his wisdom; and all its obligations derive their sanction from *him*, as Author and Finisher of the Christian faith. All its various parts indicate the same origin. The same intelligence, evidently presided over the production of all its pages. Unity of design, and integrity of plan, everywhere pervade its whole extent. Every attempt at imitation or imposture has been detected and punished by the just and jealous Author of our holy religion. It possesses some attributes, in common with other and diverse systems of morality; but still, it is distinguished as a *grand peculium*, and its peculiarities will not allow it to coalesce with other systems, so as to affect its identity in the least. It is still *one thing*, and *always* needful.

It is *one*, as a *principle of life*. The source of *this* life is

*one*. Its method of communication is *one*. Its mode of operation *one*. A *unity* of design pervades all its mysterious precepts. Its subjects are *one* in principle, practice, and affection, when fully under its influence. Its path and direction are *one*. It is *one*, as the only grand principle or condition of eligibility to eternal life. It leads to the salvation of *one* vast family; and lands that family in the one and only city of the living God. It operates thus throughout the whole sphere of our moral existence. It enlightens the conscience, renovates our nature, sublimates the affections, and bends the will to good and noble purposes. In the wide compass of human being, all who own its sway, form but *one* body of Heaven-compacted vigor, strength and beauty. The distant hemispheres are bound together in bands of the kindest regard; and although separated by the diameter of the globe, the friends of the Redeemer and the disciples of his religion, are united by the one common tie of which we speak. It is a principle of life, one and single, binding all in vital union with the throne of God. All live the life of goodness, of glory and of God.

It is *one* as a *rule of action*. Its principles and precepts never vary to suit different purposes and varying circumstances. All ages, nations, families, and individuals are required to "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things." Its moral precepts are founded in eternal equity. The morality of the Bible is that of Heaven and eternity; and can never be altered so as to change its nature.

It involves all our interests, and furnishes motives of unbounded application. The grand elements and principles of rectitude are the same in every age and province of God's creation. Deference to his authority, subordination to his will, and obedience to his word and laws, constitute piety, whenever and wherever it is found. This holds true, especially, in relation to man. The repentance, faith, regeneration,

obedience, and eternal life of the gospel, are one and immutable. They never vary—never change. The gospel does not vary with the varying tastes of men. It is not yielding or accommodating in its requirements. At the Pole and under the Line, it is always the same. One and indivisible, its course is high, onward, and unbending. It opens its one great path to heaven, and gladdens its millions on the road.

The Christian religion is *one* in the *nature* and *extent* of its *provisions*; and *one* in the unrestricted *burden of its blessings* to every rank and condition of fallen humanity. It is *one* in its *ultimate issue*. The moral product of its good to man, is the same to all the faithful. It issues in grace to man on earth, and glory in heaven—in virtuous trial here, and blissful recompense hereafter. It guards us amid the slippery uncertainties of life. It lights up the valley of the shadow of death with a halo of glory; and finally, crowds the myriad mansions of the heavenly world, with the triumphant multitude that “no man can number.” Our true interest is the treasure sought—our happiness, the prize contended for. We may “sow in tears,” but we shall “reap in joy.” The song of the reapers, and the shoutings of the last harvest, shall be,—Glory to God, and good to man. But its issues are fearful, as well as glorious. It is armed with punishment, as well as reward. It not only meditates the salvation of its friends, but will mete out fearful penalty to all its foes. The *one*, she points to thrones when mortality is swallowed up of life—the other, to the deep, dark dungeons of dread damnation. With a voice, sweeter than the harps of cherubim, she says,—“Come ye blessed,” and lo! heaven is full! And turning to her enemies, she says, in accents louder than old ocean in his loudest roar,—“Depart ye cursed,” and hell can hold no more! And now, heaven’s triumphant multitude strike their harps, while the vanquished millions of the damned sob with fresh despair!

In embarking in the Christian profession, the stake is eternal life—the journey's end is heaven. Without religion, you contravene the design of your introduction into being, and cannot but be miserable. If you do not appreciate his care—if you do not repay that care with the movements of devout thankfulness, you cannot expect to be happy; and it is as impossible for God to make you so, as it is for him to lie. God made you for heaven and happiness. Religion furnishes the means by which you are to be placed in their possession. No other system addresses itself to this task, without evident symptoms of weakness and folly. By how far, therefore, you wish to escape the punishment of hell and get to heaven, by so far, religion is needful. The wretchedness of earth, the felicity of heaven, and the pains of hell, all plead and publish her importance.

Where will you go for a substitute for religion? What *bonus* will furnish you with an indemnifying apology?—a sufficient recompense against its loss? Will you go to the domains of kings? Will you woo the philosophy of the schools? Will you kneel in the pagan pantheon? Will you enter a student in the great temple of nature? Can the furniture of the heavens, or the massive grandeur of earth, supply your wants? Surely not. The anxious bosom still throbs in unison with the tear—“*one thing is needful*,” and the experience of ages furnishes the echo! Christianity will bless you with a distinction the Cæsars could not confer, nor kingdoms purchase—that praise cannot impart, nor reproach take away—that life cannot bestow, nor death destroy!

### III. *Religion is infinitely important.*

Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward; or as the stream takes the inclination of the channel. His first cry is the voice of want; and his last tears are from the same source. The quivering flame of life must be watched; or the first pre-

vailing blast will extinguish the fire. His fast-returning wants must be supplied ; or he is the victim of agony and despair. The expansive grasp of his eager longing mind, must be filled by some grand and satisfying object ; or he abandons himself to the vanities of fruitless search, and the puerilities of worthless enjoyment ; and with no other sustenance than that of this world's elements, the hopes of immortality must perish!

1. Religion is important to the happiness of man, in all the aspects in which we can view him. Man is a curse to himself, and a plague to God's creation, unless he answer the end for which he was made—Naught of all that belongs to God or man can supersede this necessity. This end, he cannot answer without religion ; for it is this alone assigns him his station and consequence, as a displaced link in the great consecutive chain of being.

The present is rather a negative proposition. We intend to say, man cannot be happy, by a necessity of his being, unless he have religion. Man was made for religion—that is, the fellowship of his Creator. Well may every human being say, "All my springs are in thee;" and the laws of intellectual being must be reversed, and the purposes of God made of none effect, before he can be happy without it. Could we admit so anomalous a supposition, man might be insphered in heaven, and yet, without the fellowship of heaven's King, as to all the more weighty interests of his being, might be damned "fast by the throne of God!" His happiness depends not upon any conceivable locality of his being, but upon the moral relations in which he stands to the fountain of his being. I may be deprived of every thing else but religion, and yet be happy—destitute of this, every thing else can only make me miserable. If without name or fame, I am loved and prized by God alone—if poor, I am rich in faith and good works—if persecuted and hunted down, "when my father and mother forsake me, the Lord shall take me up." If I suffer

here, I shall reign hereafter. If I sigh on earth, I shall sing in heaven. If distinguished in this world by all the squalid insignia of poverty and wretchedness, in heaven I shall have palms and crowns and sceptres, as the ensigns of joy and conquest. As a prince with God, the Christian prevailed, and immortality begins his joys, and the only *end* they know is *never to close!*

2. Religion is *important to men universally.*

The world over and ended, from the cottage to the throne, religion is the *unum necessarium*—the one great necessity of man. It is essentially, immeasurably, eternally needful. However fortunate our condition—however felicitous our temperament—however remarkable for our prudence we may be, none of these things diminish, in the least, the importance of religion. Deprived of the means of overt impiety—without hands, feet, ears, eyes, or tongue—without an associate with whom to sin—buried in solitude or immured in dungeons, religion is alike important; because the inveterate disease of our nature can only be cured by it; and nothing else can secure our passport to immortality.

Human nature is a simple unit; or rather, a grand universality; and is the same in every man. Individual man is an epitome of collective, universal man. What is necessary to the happiness of *one*, is necessary to the happiness of *all*. The component elements of human nature, exist entire in every man; and the same moral sustenance—the same immortal food, is as necessary for the king and the czar, as for the peasant and pauper.

3. Religion is important to man *in every condition.*

The direct influence of prosperity is, to kill the noblest energies of our being, and degrade the image of God in man. In prosperity, therefore, religion is necessary to secure us from inconsideration, folly, and self-sufficiency. Equally important is it in adversity—the more common lot of man. In adversity,

God imbitters one part of our existence, in order to the supreme felicity of the other. It often happens, that nothing but the lowering tempest can lift our eyes to the great Author of our benefits. And if it be necessary to tear up the bosom of the earth to make it fruitful, equally important is it to the human heart, to give it fertility in wisdom and virtue. Affliction is the only school in which man will learn. Lethargy and insensibility, in the calm and painted bosom of prosperity, relax all the noble and self-denying feelings of our nature, while adversity call them into supreme and dignified action. Hence, says God, "I have called to them in their abundance, and they would not hear." Weak in their pursuits, corrupt in their morals, and running with fools the giddy ring of folly, they had no ear for God,—no taste for his book and ordinances; but when the winged messengers of his vengeance—plague, pestilence, and famine, and the whole variety of his terrific lessons, in a train of wretchedness, came upon them. then they rose to seek him early. Man is, to a great extent, a child of impression—the creature of circumstances; and unless his affluence or penury—his good name or the want of it, be sanctified and duly controlled by religion, any situations in which he may be placed, will be found injurious. It is religion alone that can resemble him to the tree of the forest, that "greens in the sun, and strengthens in the blast." The soul of man naturally possesses an energy—a daring that is never satisfied, unless connected with futurity, and engaged in some undying enterprise—unless thus embarked in the noble ambition of some future and final good, the most promising earthly lot, can only tend to dwarf its conceptions, and cripple its researches.

4. Religion is always—uninterruptedly needful. It is easier to sound the depths of the ocean, than to sound and fathom the ever-successive anxieties of our nature, after real and satisfying enjoyments. The orbs of heaven are not more restless

in their ceaseless roll, than is the ambition of our common nature, for some substantial good. Man's immortal spirit, asleep or awake, is always active; and its active energies must be employed about some good that will be adequate to the satiety and fruition of all his faculties and feelings.

The oneness of our nature renders our wants identical; and hence, that which supplies them, must be a perpetual and unceasing good. And what more perpetual and unvarying than the Christian religion? It is this sun, milder than his type in the heavens, that travels with the stranger over the deserts of Africa; and it is this that must gild the wastes of Northern snows. It is a fruit that is never out of season—a flower that is always in bloom—a well that never dries—a sun that never goes down—a life that knows no death! It is heaven without the fear of hell!

5. Religion is necessary, in order to the use and enjoyment of the common blessings of life. These should be enjoyed with a sense of dependence, that religion alone can inspire. They should be enjoyed with a sense of gratitude, to which religion alone can give birth. They should be used and enjoyed, as it respects ourselves, with a moderation and temperance, that are only the dictates of religion. They should be distributed among our fellows with a benevolence that we can only copy from God and his Church. They should be sought and loved with a degree of partiality that the gospel alone can apportion and adjust. Religion, therefore, is always in place—always necessary. It secures the friendship of God, and glory of heaven.

6. Religion is eminently needful in affliction and trial. In affliction and adversity, nothing can sustain the wounded spirit of man, but that which can hold communion with his spirit, in spite of all the evils that assault his feeble frame and trembling hopes. When all is grief within and desolation without, what can come to the bleeding bosom of suffering humanity,



except the Christian religion, and say, "Peace, be still?" In every possible condition, it can reach and bless you. She can dispense her radiance, in spite of locks, and grates, and dungeons; and when you kneel over the tomb of departed worth and consecrated affection, and record in tears the bitter dirge of a broken heart, even then she whispers peace, and "let immortal springs in the human breast," and tells the way to another and a better world. Affliction and trial give to the soul of man an energy, an elasticity, a buoyancy, not the offspring of any thing else.

7. Religion is *needful in death*.

What, but the angel religion, can support us amid the awful throes of expiring nature? What but this, can point to the land of heavenly vision, and say, "In my Father's house are many mansions?" What else can throw the radiance of heaven over the darkness of the tomb, and point to the opening perspective that lies beyond the grave?

Cling, therefore, to this last and only resource of miserable man, as the guardian angel of your being; and when death shall arrive, amid the swellings of Jordan, may the religion of Jesus, that immortalized the cottage of Bethany, gild the last hours of your toil, and throne you with the blest in heaven, where God and goodness dwell for ever. In death, the rustic and the sage usually think and feel alike. This is an hour of truth and sincerity. All mingle with familiarity in death. Some may indeed carry their infatuated stupidity, or philosophic cunning, even to the mouth of the grave, and their ruling passion may be strong, even in death. In such cases, our only conclusion is, that they are judicially blinded; and given over to the insane hardihood of the scorner and the fiend! They may fall in death as the steed does in battle, or the ox under the hand of the executioner, without thought or care; but their "root is rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust." It is religion alone that can alliance man with his

Creator, and give him songs of joy in death. To die, is to leave the streams of life for the fountain. It is, to lose our road on earth, and find ourselves in heaven.

Finally, as a *preparation for heaven*, religion is indispensable. If none can enter heaven, but those whose taste has been formed upon the maxims of another, and an enduring world, what but religion can fit us for the pure abode of God—the home of angels? If we must be familiar here with the kind of happiness current there, or never enter the city that forbids defilement, what but the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the choice of Mary, can prepare us for the high rewards and delights of heaven! If all the goods of the universe, and the loftiest pretensions of human pride, cannot legitimate our claim to immortality, the gospel alone can effect it. Then it is demonstrably clear, that the Christian religion is of more importance to man, than any thing else within the gift of God, or grasp of mind. All the treasures of universal being—all the bounties of the universal God, cannot open to us the gates of heaven's eternal city, if the needful blessings of religion be wanting.

Children of mortality! think on these things; and ask your hearts, whether this world's wares and commodities, in exchange for religion, can dissipate the gloom of the hell that awaits you, or melodize the groans of the damned, in the place to which you go!

In the same proportion that religion is demonstrated to be true, it must be important. To suppose its falsehood, is to question all the moral data of demonstration under heaven. You have to renounce all evidence arising from history; the evidence of prophecy; of miracles; all internal evidence; that arising from direct efficacy, and long, and well-attested utility; you must renounce the voice of experience for ages; and you have to do, what no man, not cursed with the insanity of inveterate infidelity, will dare to do—deny the evi-

dence of ten thousand kindred probabilities, without a single opposing one !

Of the importance of religion, therefore, who can doubt? Heaven, earth, and hell unite, and with a thousand organs, repeat the language of my text—"One thing is needful." It told on the destinies of the world before the flood, before the law, before Christ and the gospel, and ever since. God has uttered it in thunder, and breathed it in fire! The heavens have groaned it in tempests, and wept it in showers! History and experience have written it on both sides of every leaf in nature; and it stands everywhere engraved on the columns of creation, deep as the centre, towering as the air! We leave you in the hand of God. Again, the Bible and the pulpit have thrown down heaven and hell at your feet; it may be the last time. Even Almighty Pity, provoked beyond forbearance, may soon swear your names from the roll of probation and register of mercy! May God direct your choice, and Heaven crown your election with its own bliss, and the grandeur of eternity!

## SERMON XIV

## RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE.

“He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures; but if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.”—JOB xxxvi. 10–12.

DISCIPLINE, *in morals, is understood to mean instruction—correction—government—general improvement.* More definitely it means a *system* of instruction, etc. It contemplates authority and subjection. It supposes the existence of a known and recognized power to enforce rules of conduct, and the obligation of obedience, on the part of those who become the subjects of such discipline. Man’s present condition is an irregular and disordered one. This irregularity and disorder relate to his head and heart—his mind and affections—his understanding and feelings. Man, therefore, clearly needs to be corrected in his principles and practice. Both the inner and outer man must be reformed. Now, the great object of religious discipline is to accomplish this. The reformation of man is two-fold—internal and external; and the discipline of religion is admirably calculated to produce this change. Every feeling and energy is addressed; an appeal is made both to our hopes and fears.

1. *The discipline of religion, including its doctrines and duties.* It originated with the will and authority of Heaven. God has revealed his will and purposes to man. He has ad-

dressed himself to the human understanding, in terms, at once, reasonable and intelligible. Such communication of his will and mind, has been accompanied by evidence the most clear and convincing in its nature. Hence, man's belief in, and attachment to such revelation, becomes at once a reasonable service. He has, moreover, taught us the nature and circumstances of the obedience required, in order to a saving and abiding interest in his favor. He has furnished us with sufficient motives, and with the behooved ability. And hence, demands that we love and serve him faithfully. Thus, religion is a system of discipline. It is perfect, wanting nothing. There is no defect, either of our nature or lives, that this religion is not especially prepared to correct. It is a sovereign antidote against all injurious error, either in your creed or lives. It looks on nothing, injurious to man, with the least connivance. It seeks your welfare, not your pleasure; your real, and not your imaginary good. It is intended to educate and prepare you for the enjoyments and service of eternity.

This gospel provides not only for the peace of a sinner, but also for his purity: also, it offers, not *only* securities for the acceptance of the guilty, but for the obedience and holiness of every genuine disciple of the New Testament.

*The agency of the Divine Spirit is requisite, in disposing and enabling us to attend to this discipline;* that is, to believe the doctrines and practice the duties of the gospel. In order, however, that this discipline may take effect upon the susceptibilities of our moral constitution, it is necessary that the ear, by the Spirit of God—by a supernatural agency, be opened to attend and receive. The inner man is so closed to all that is good; so hardened; so mailed and secure, by sin and insensibility, that nothing, short of an Almighty effort, can remove the fearful interception between God and the human soul. God himself must open the ear to discipline; or it

remains closed for ever. Would *we* open your ear to discipline, we must have immediate recourse to the power of God. All our appeals to your notice and conviction will be in vain, without this all-powerful remedy—the enlightening and convincing Spirit of God. The Spirit of all grace must interpose his peculiar office of revelation. Light and truth must beam on your darkened understanding from the sanctuary of God. The grace of conviction must seize your dormant faculties and slumbering energies, as the effulgence of creation's morn dissipated the surrounding darkness, or as the lightning of heaven assails the mountain pine or forest oak! Such is the resistless and unresisted agency of the Spirit, in producing the work of conviction—in opening our eyes to discipline.

But when once the mind is restored to a state of competent moral perception and action; when the delusion and blindness of the natural man are banished; when the will—the faculty of dominion in man, is restored to its proper functions, then man is consulted on the subject of his recovery, as an accountable, voluntary creature—an agent; a view of man which always implies the power of self-determination. I do not say, that man is not all along addressed as a rational creature, capable of the power of choice; but at this crisis, he is so addressed in a peculiar manner; and I beg leave to remark, that this early occurs with every human being, possessing sanity of understanding, and the power of moral action. God early opens the ear of all to discipline; and then commands that they return from iniquity. The means by which this is effected are various; sometimes by the direct communication of his Spirit; sometimes by his word; sometimes by his judgments. God is said to open the ear in oppression; that is, severe affliction. Even in dreams and visions, he is said to open the ear to wisdom, and seal instruction. Our feelings are dead and inurned—cold and insusceptible—locked up in eternal frost, until the Spirit of God visit and move us.

We are under obligations to relinquish sin, and engage in holiness. This obligation is imposed by the God of our being, and of all that gladdens it—the great Lawgiver of the universe. It requires, that the sinner retrace his steps in the path of sin and folly that leads to death and hell—that he return to *Him* from whom he has so deeply revolted. And after this, he must obey and serve him.—*Obey* his commands addressed to the heart and life; and *serve* him, as every way dependent upon him, and under many, and increasing obligations to him. It applies to all, and to all in every conceivable condition, from the first hour of responsibility, until they close their eyes in death. You must be holy, for God with whom you wish to live is holy.

*This renunciation of crime must be entire.* You must not regard iniquity, even in your heart. Truth is required in the inward parts. The least known obliquity is fatal in religion. Your idols must be given “to the moles and bats.” You must seek to be adorned by the Spirit, and beautified by the holiness of Christ. Holiness should be your only engrossing concern. It is your being’s end and aim. It is the “one thing needful” to man. It insures heaven, and places all your enemies in the distance from you. Unhurt and secure, you may then keep the noiseless tenor of your way. An unholy Christian—a sinful saint—a wicked follower of Christ, is a contradiction that Heaven can neither reconcile nor tolerate! You must, therefore, turn from iniquity, and obey and serve him. The discipline of religion requires *purity* as well as submission. It asks, not only the deference of the understanding, but the devotion of the heart—not only the mind’s consent, but the fondness of affection. The obligation extends to the entire of your conscious being, in all the possibilities of action, enjoyment, and suffering. God must be “diffused through every part, and reign triumphant in the heart.”

*The rewards of faithful obedience.* Peace and happiness—peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. You possess a title to heaven, and are constantly acquiring a meetness for it. You love, and are beloved of Heaven. You are successful in your efforts to glorify God, and magnify your own nature in its final salvation. The Rock of ages supports you, and the bounties of Heaven supply you. Every wind wafts you favor, and every moment brings you tribute. The universe is laid under contribution to make you happy. Heaven protects—earth entertains you, and hell looks on with half-approving, covetous gaze. How enviable the dignity of being a Christian—a genuine, Heaven-directed follower of Jesus Christ! I may live in rags, and die in poverty, but my name is recorded in the Lamb's book of life, and sparkles refulgently on the page of immortality. I have nor house nor home on earth, but I have a throne and a mansion and friends in heaven. *Here* I am depressed and sorrowful; but *there* await me joys and pleasures that would make an angel dizzy with delight! The prosperity of my being is its well-being—is the security and promotion of my immortal weal; but I am not only prosperous, rich and happy by charter, I am so in fact by experience. I am happy. My mind and heart have closed in with Heaven and heavenly enjoyments. God is my reconciled Father, and “wrapped in his being, I resound his praise.” Amid all the slippery uncertainties, and displacing fluctuations of life, I repose in conscious security upon the soul-ennobling durabilities of an eternal scene.

*The recompense of final impiety and disobedience, under the Divine administration.* “Sword,” in the figurative language of all nations, symbolizes authority—distinction—justice—vengeance. The meaning of the text, therefore, is, that the wicked shall perish, or pass away by the justice of God—the vengeance of Heaven. They shall go to their own place—shall die without the knowledge of salvation by the remission



of their sins; and be ruined and undone in all their prospects during the long after-term of their being. May God avert the impending miseries of the unregenerate, by securing their return from iniquity, and restoring them to the life of his Son!

That there is wrath in God, is proved by the whole language of Scripture—by the varied and concurrent history of all the dispensations of the Deity, in heaven, earth and hell. Hence, the supreme importance of the warnings—the heed—the caution recommended in the text. By the “stroke of God,” we understand the infliction of this wrath, in whatever way. By being “taken away,” we understand removal to a place of punishment, permanent, final, and eternal. By the impracticability of deliverance, we are taught that no ransom, however illimitable in magnitude, will be accepted in the stead of our souls. Hell is our only abode, and we must make our bed there. How shall we symbolize, or adequately paint this exhibition—this consummation of vengeance? It is not the wrath—the *fury* of an earthly sovereign. It is not the angry assault or pursuit of a Pharaoh or a Frederick! God All-sufficient, by you forsaken and insulted, stands forth in the array of his indignation—stands forth your determined and unappeased enemy. The impending stroke in the text, is not directed by created aim or might. It is not from the waving scimitar of Ulysses or the girding cutlass of Hector, but it is a stroke, dire and untempered, from God’s almighty arm, that will sink the millions of his disaffected subjects farther down in the profound of hell, in the twinkling of an eye, than a sunbeam could fly in an age! May God grant you repentance unto life! and may his attributes form a canopy of defence over your heads in the great day of the manifestation of consciences!

## SERMON XV

## CHRISTIAN DEVOTION.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.”—JAMES iv. 8.

DEVOTION is the most exalted of all moral excellences; and is at once the chief duty and highest honor of man. It implies, first, a knowledge of the true God, as revealed in the Scriptures. This is the great *basis* of all acceptable devotion. Defective and unworthy conceptions of the greatest and best of beings, must for ever stand opposed to all rational intercourse with him, or obedience to him, that will be at all acceptable and profitable. From this grand defect flow all the enormities of Pagan folly and Mohammedan delusion; as also, the greater part of impurity in the Christian world. This obedience cannot be yielded, nor can this intercourse be held, without justly conceiving of that assemblage of perfections which the page of inspiration has thrown so splendidly around the great Creator of all. We must receive the record God has given of himself. Without enlightened and generous views of God and virtue, we shall not be likely to approach the one, or practice the other.

There must be, on the part of the worshipper, some distinct apprehension of that august and awful Being with whom we have to do. There must be abiding sentiments of awe and veneration. In order that we may be prepared for the joys and services of the heavenly world, it is matter of obvious

necessity, that we become acquainted with the nature and claims of the Being, whose presence and friendship constitute the glory and happiness of the heavenly state. All true religion retrospectively terminates in just conceptions of the Deity. It is knowledge of the true God that binds conscience to the eternal throne. It is this leads the wretched and miserable to the mercy-seat. It is the awe-inspiring thought, that God is the witness and the avenger of crime, that impels thoughtless and careless millions to sue for his protection and tenderness. "This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This alone can result in holiness—the supreme beauty of the soul—the resemblance of angels, and the image of God.

A knowledge of God, his counsels, and his ways, must operate to the restraint of vice, and the promotion of piety. And although Deity is shrouded in the abstraction and obscurity of his own unfathomable nature,—although immensity is the space over which he stretches his line of action, and the light of long eternity alone can unfold the bearings of his plans, yet enough is known and understood, to regulate safely and successfully, both our faith and practice. Hence, if we would be devout and holy, there must be, on our part, an appropriating, reverential apprehension of the Deity. The clear radiance of truth must be perceived, in all its unsullied lustre and beauty. He, therefore, who does not *know* God, cannot *approach* him! Devotion, the prime subject-matter of religion, is a personal concern.

*Reverence.*—Devout fear and dread. *First*, we must be conscious of the presence and inspection of our Almighty Sovereign. His knowledge of our ways and paths, as well as all the thoughts of the heart, can never in the mind of the Christian, be divorced from his absolute omniscience. "Thou God seest me," should be engraved on the heart in lines of light; and this impression should always pervade every por-

tion of our conscious being. His goodness upholds, and his bounty supplies you; and will you not fear to provoke the withdrawal of both? He holds creation in his grasp, and its glories fade before his brightness, and do you not tremble before his greatness? The beauty that adorns, the plenty and variety that bless creation, are all from him, and can you revolve the thought without grateful veneration? His supreme intelligence points all the laws of nature to the fulfilment of his will, and can you hear it told, without emotion or alarm? Suns and systems, sparks and atoms, are blended in his plans, and can you provoke his anger, without dreading his resources? He wields worlds, guides the hosts of heaven, controls the elements, and gives mandates to the nations; and can you reflect on his majesty, without feeling an answering thrill of dread—of mingled awe and veneration? God is everywhere;—there is no place in the universe abroad—no given locality, in all the mighty vast through which creation wheels her fires, where he is not; where he does not extend his presence and inspection! Let then your every act of devotion ascribe greatness to God, and award to him alone the claim and distinction of being feared! Was he justly feared by the dismayed thousands of Israel, when he published his fiery law upon Horeb—when no angel shapes broke the gloom—no angel melodies were heard amid the pealing thunder! equally is he to be feared now: for when we are not found at the foot of the mercy-seat, our God is still a consuming fire! The magnificence, the purity, the tenderness of Jehovah—creation's Friend and Father—the might of his wonder-working arm—the blessings of his all-pervading providence—these are celebrated in the notes of the rapt seraph; they swell loftily upon the harps of cherubim; and where is our piety, if we fail to add responsively our own amen!

Such views of the Deity as those we have been unfolding, must leave a deep and undying spell upon the heart; and

without them we cannot find his seat, nor claim the notice of his ear. The honor of God must not be made to suffer with us by reason of his condescension. His goodness must not lead us to forget his greatness. Beings of yesterday, in converse with the eternal mind! Ignorance expostulating with omniscience! The frailty of earth appealing to almighty reason—templed majesty—reserved immensity! Heaven challenged by the molehill! Immensity jewelled with worlds!—Whenever you approach him, therefore, let it be under the influence of a chastened and all-pervading awe.

The affection of *love* is equally and every way necessary to devotion. “Thou shalt love, therefore, thy God with all thy heart.” If we love an object, we seek to possess it. Thus loving, and seeking the possession of it, we become, in the full and philosophical sense of the term, devoted to it. Indeed, devotion without love, is a solecism. Enmity, or even indifference, is utterly inconsistent with the idea of devotion. Love, therefore,—sincere affection, is eminently characteristic of devotion. Our Lord’s description of the undevout is “I know you, that the love of God is not in you.” No action of our lives can befriend our mortal interests without love to God. All the holy pleasure—the heavenly raptures of devotion, are traced to this source; and hence, it is said, the obligation comprehends “the law and the prophets.” Love to God will diffuse itself over the whole map of human concern and avocation, “like the sweet south that breathes upon a bank of violets.” “We love him because he first loved us.”

The love of God has been endlessly diversified in its manifestations, but in its nature it is simple and indivisible. It is an intense—an infinitely expansive—an eternal flame of uncompounded good-will. With God’s love of us, ours of him must correspond. The affections, as a part of our moral constitution, must enter largely into the business of religion; and

especially the affection of love. Christianity is not a barren system of speculative truth—a mere collection or code of specific statutes—the light of religion is not a cold, unimpassioned coruscation; but it imparts heavenly warmth to the region of the affections. The infinite grandeur of religious truth impresses the heart, by bringing into view the numerous duties of time, and the momentous expectations of eternity. It unfolds immortal interests, spreading throughout boundless duration; and points to innumerable gradations of bliss or wretchedness, of which the mysterious nature of man is susceptible; and unless thus influenced and impressed by religion—unless constantly impatient for the free range of heavenly enjoyment, you have studied religion as a law, and not as a delight. It is your schoolmaster—not your confidential friend—you have not leaned upon the bosom of the Redeemer, you have only entered the lecture-room of the philosopher! How many engaging displays of the Creator's skill—how many manifestations of mysterious kindness—how many distinguished memorials of truth and faithfulness—how many illustrious exhibitions and associations of inimitable condescension, in the administrations of nature, providence, and grace, breathe an impressive and enrapturing cadence to the heart of man!

Reflect upon the happiness lost by sin, and the privileges restored by the gospel—upon the dark ground of human demerit, and the glories of redemption will shine with irresistible brilliancy; and this contrast will add humility to praise, and love to admiration. Indeed, love is represented as the source—the attendant, and the result of true religion. It is the substance and epitome of Christian duty. It is a celestial spirit which mingles with, and informs the whole mass of our intellectual and moral faculties. In one word, the whole inner and outer man, are brought under the silent and subduing influence of this all-hallowed principle! Let your love to God

be disinterested and supreme. Let it sway the mingled crowd of the affections, and preside over all the inclinations of the heart!

Another attribute of true devotion is, to aim at the glory of God, and our own immortal good, in the performance of every duty. Without such end and aim consecrating our spiritual exercises,—without these God-adoring, soul-ennobling motives, our devotion, at best, is only hypocrisy and deceit. The moral government of God is awake to the most concealed and private infringement upon his holy precepts. He is also attentive to all our efforts to please him. Every sigh that leaves your bosom in despair, reaches his ear and affects his heart. Every contrite movement in your breast brings his kindness nearer. Every glow of gratitude that lights up your countenance, increases his complacency. And every cloud of godly sorrow that passes over your brow, sends its shade to the throne of God, compassed as it is with undiminished brightness. It is devotion that binds the allegiance of man to the throne of the universe. These are endearing views of the Divine character; and their influence must be attractive. God made you for the purposes of his glory; and unless you seek to further these purposes, he will not, *cannot* bless you.

Devotion implies a constant and an ever-increasing desire to be moulded into a resemblance to him with whom we have to do. It is the sacred, the Godlike ambition of the Christian, to resemble his Divine Master—his heavenly Father. If we aim at securing our final translation to a happy eternity in heaven, our lives must furnish a transcript copy here, of all the moral and imitable perfections of the Deity. If we would be finally associated with him in heaven, we must study in his school on earth. The world about us should be a temple, and the worshipper should look on all surrounding objects, as sacredly dedicated to the glory of God and the best interests

of man. Before man can become devout and happy, the image of God must be reëngraved upon his heart. Would you fight for the cause of eternity, it must be done with the weapons of time. Do you seek the end, you must employ the means. Sin is too deeply ingrained in the heart, to be expelled in a moment. The work of sanctification is gradual and accumulative. Your goodness based upon the fear of God, must be moulded by fellowship with him. How ought shame to mantle your cheek, because you so little resemble him ! Look at your thoughts—look at your passions—examine your feelings—revolve your projects—review your lives, and what is the result ? Is it not that you are robbing God, and with suicidal madness, murdering your own souls !

What mean your pursuits—your plans—your purposes ? Is not God excluded from them all ? In what class or description of them do you resemble him ? Are you not in all these things the antipodes of what you ought to be ? You have, indeed, sat for your likeness ; but the resemblance proclaims your alliance with fools and fiends, rather than the God of Heaven ! The assumed piety of such will be of no service to them when finally judged ; when destiny shall concentrate in their hearts the pangs of a thousand hells !

Devotion implies that the *inner* man shall act in unison with the *outer*, in all the exercises and struggles of the Christian profession. The heart is the seat, the source, and the altar of the devotion we describe. Insincerity is its curse and bane. God is to be our chief good, in all the commerce of life, as well as when we approach the sanctuary of God, or his table, loaded with the memorials of our redemption. His law requires truth in the inward parts. His word must be hid in the heart. The leaven of truth and sincerity is required. Regarding iniquity in our hearts, we shall not be heard. In order to access to God, and admission finally into the magnificent palace of his glory, it is imperatively



meet and requisite, that we study internal conformity to his will and purposes. In every act of intercourse with God, man should be strictly and inexorably honest. If you approach him with lips stained with hypocrisy, and a heart in which evil thoughts and vicious passions are bred and burrowed, you beg denial of God, and challenge him to the work of judgment! To approach the mercy-seat—the foot of the throne of God, in the language of vanity and equivocation, is to trifle with yourselves, and insult the Author of your blessings and bounties! Is it not to be feared, that too many approach the footstool of the Almighty, and there, in measured accents, confess their sins, in order that they may recommence a career of vice, with less compunction? When trial and difficulty arise, their goodness, like the frosts of the morning, melts away. They retreat before adversity, and cry with Cain, “My burden is greater than I can bear!”

Devotion implies *prayer* and *dependence*. Prayers, such as the great Intercessor may repeat in the ear of his Father. It implies a grateful remembrance of his constant care and kindness. It is devotion that ennobles the character of man, and schools his soul for heaven. Draw nigh to God in the performance of duty, and he will draw nigh to you in the way of mercy. Draw nigh to him in acts of constant obedience, and he will draw nigh to you in the bestowment of perpetual peace and tranquillity. Draw nigh to him throughout time, and he will reveal himself as your portion in vast eternity!

*The ADVANTAGES of devotion.* It dignifies the entire of our nature, by constantly referring us to our immediate duty and ultimate destination. The dignifying employments of devotion respect both the mind and heart. The mind is the first and the highest place, part, or division, in the human economy—the organic constitution of our nature. Its discipline is always first and superior: but no action of the thinking power within us, can equal its approach to the throne

of God, in devout aspirations for his grace and glory, to be given in needed measure to the humble supplicant. We are inspired with a degree of self-reverence when we are thus found before the everlasting throne. The heart is equally affected and occupied—the *heart*, the source of ardor and activity, the seat of attachment and vitality, is ever and warmly enlisted in this holy service. With the eye of the mind we see God, but it is by the embrace of the heart we possess him: for “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” It is there the new covenant is inscribed—the new commandment takes effect. It is there “the love of God is shed abroad,” and the irradiations of heavenly light diffuse their transforming influence!

The silently pervading, or tumultuous swell of feeling, must be subjected to discipline, and enlisted in the cause of God. All intemperate and blinded excitement, however, should be avoided. An insane or whimsical piety—the madness of an undiscerning mushroom sanctity, should be held in determined derision, by all who have any regard for the sober principles and precepts of Christianity! There is about many professing Christians a starched ignorance—a reserved gravity—an affected frigidity—an imposing sanctimonious exterior, which, by many, will be taken for piety; but which, in the estimation of a well-informed Christian, is an abomination to good sense, to say no more. The language of piety is that of humility. “Eternal Potter! remember man is clay, O mend what thou hast made, and I have broke!” External piety alone, is a base coin that will be rejected with indignant scorn in Heaven’s exchequer. It is sincere, habitual devotion, that must reform individuals, families, and communities—that is destined gradually to prevail, until earth with her thousand voices shall call on God, and the shout of nations peal the anthem of a new-born world!

Habits of devotion are perfective of the Christian character,

in those who maintain them. That they are incalculably *needful* for this purpose, is self-evident. These alone can contribute effectively to our improvement. A taste—a relish for Divine things, can alone be acquired by habit; and without such taste and relish, perseverance in a course of holy living is impossible. With the Christian, thought should grow into desire, desire ripen into resolve, and resolve lead to, and terminate in execution. If thus, and constantly engaged in the performance of duty, Heaven's grace shall reach you like the dews of Hermon, impearling the flowers of Palestine! Look to *him* for the heart-transforming power of faith—the conscience-commanding energy of the Holy Ghost! Devotion does not consist of casual, and unconnected acts. Where it is really implanted, it becomes a ruling passion—a law of our condition, and gives color and character to our whole life.

How often is our goodness “like the morning cloud and early dew!” How often is Ephraim “a cake unturned,”—half prepared for the table! Our seriousness is fitful—our devotion occasional—our religion partial! Affliction sobers us—misfortune depresses—conscience wounds and appalls for a time—we catch at church the contagion of a sigh, a groan, a tear,—the tide of emotion swells, and we go with the current; but soon, we return to folly, and are what we were before! God is neglected, repentance postponed, and heaven and hell become harmless items in the calendar of life. A few pitiful acres, or bales of merchandise, are sufficient materials to form an apology for going to hell! Dissipation dethrones the Creator in the heart, and the gilded toys of human folly are preferred to thrones and crowns in heaven!

“He will draw nigh to you,” to protect and defend you. Infinite understanding and almighty power will unite to preserve you from evil. His providence is particular and special.

He does not govern the world in the gross. He has not contracted with some fixed principle, and then left the whole machinery—the grand universality of things, to pursue its uneven and capricious course. He arranges, guides, and governs all. He consults the wants of the raven, he eyes the falling sparrow, and numbers the hairs of your head. You cannot be wretched without his sympathy. You cannot be miserable without his wishing you to be happy. Your life may indeed appear at the caprice of every breeze, but still his hand is your sanctuary, and his energy your support. Your language to him is, “On the wide ocean or in port, be thou our anchor still.” No distance obscures his view: no revolutions can shake his throne. He is ever present, ever felt, “in the wide waste, as in the city full; and where he vital breathes, there must be joy.” You may be exposed to persecution—you may be devoted to martyrdom—you may be incarcerated in dungeons where the light of day never comes, and the influence of the heavens is only felt in your hearts, yet in all the trials and details of your lot, Christianity will prove a confidential friend, and sympathize with every wish and want of your heart.

God will draw nigh to you, to enlighten, and lead you in the paths of righteousness. Amid the conflicts of human interests and human passions—amid all the gloomy and involved mazes of life, he will cause light to arise in darkness, and guide you by his unerring counsel. The light of his countenance shall gild with its radiance the path that leads to heaven. The Spirit of Christ shall take of the things that are his, and show them to us. His Almighty influence will furnish conscience with the reminiscent power of applying those truths and precepts, upon which we are to form our character for eternity. Say to him, “My God, my path, my way!” It is Heaven’s refulgent ray that must enrich the eye. Religion will unceasingly shed abroad in the mind new

and unfolding discoveries, and open up in the heart, new sources and scenes of enjoyment. Heaven shall teach you to think, and feel, and act, so as best to promote his glory, and secure to yourselves a happy immortality. Your piety will not exhibit the sterile pause of Winter, the efflorescence of Spring, and the dull repose of Summer and Autumn; but like the tropical plant, will always be in bloom and bearing! It will be the *light* and the *law* of your life.

God will succor and sustain you. In every trial and difficulty, he will revive and encourage your trembling and retreating spirits. The religion of his Son will prove a gentle, secret stream, running through life, and watering all your virtues. Religion is nothing unless it is every thing. Existence should be filled with it; and the soul should be incessantly maintained in a state of devotion to things invisible. Its hopes will recompense for its fears; and its futurity will be the reward of the past. Amid the bliss and the bitterness of life, we are alike resigned and contented. Amid the restless and tumultuated passions and interests of the world, the Christian shall stand, like the oak of Carmel, baring his time-blasted head to the rage of the tempest! The powers of darkness shall retreat before his arms; and every assault of infernal agency, shall be successfully repelled; and finally, his action with the enemy shall terminate in the glory of conquest, and the rewards of triumph! If deep in his stricken breast he feel the wound, Christ will heal and bind it up!

God will inspire the Christian with hope and comfort in life and death. He will fill him with "joy and peace in believing;" and he shall "abound in hope," through the power of the Holy Ghost. In a dignified course of untiring obedience, he shall exemplify the power of devotion. In death, his heart shall be tendered with the fire that blazes on Heaven's altars. The radiance of salvation shall beam from

his eye; and the tongue, even in the agonies of expiring nature, shall be eloquent in recommending the undying advantages, and immortal recompense of Christian devotion. Thus the hope of immortality illumines the gloom, and gilds the darkness of the grave! When the last gleams of thought stream from the fading eye,—when the accents of affection die away unheard upon the decaying senses of the child of devotion, then, *then* the songs of seraphs shall enwrap his hearing in ecstasy, and herald his passage to the skies!

The devout Christian shall face, intrepidly, the approaching horrors of death. He shall look forward to eternity unappalled and without fear; and the heroism of philosophy will be compelled to bow the head before the dignity of simple resignation. Heavenly contemplations and celestial visions will throng around the pillow that supports his dying head. Pain may wave over him her scourge in triumph,—disease may exultingly call for her long train of ills, to prey upon a frame, already disabled in the arms of death; but death, that with one hand points to the grave, will with the other throw wide the doors of the heavenly world, and introduce him to the temples, the powers, and the thrones of eternity! Death will come, but the light of Heaven will gild his dark canopy, and spurn his threatening spear! Nature may dread the deepening gloom—bereavement may cleave with pangs the bleeding heart, but hovering angels will prompt the placid smile, and point, through the portals of the tomb, to heaven's undimmed effulgence in the distance of eternity!

This nearness—this union—this sacred alliance, shall be consummated in heaven. There we shall find ourselves in the circle of the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy! There heaven and earth unite, and God and men are found in the same society! Time and eternity blend their destinies, and an indivisible, unsuc-

cessive immortality swallows up the scene! There we shall live in the community of the blessed—we shall “see as we are seen, and know as we are known.” We shall be made familiar with the record of the Divine operations, engraved in lines of light upon eternity’s splendid page; and shall gaze for ever in ecstatic wonder, and with enrapturing admiration, upon the vast—the endlessly extended chain of events, fastened eternally to the throne of Omnipotence on the one hand, and after embracing the universe, returning on the other again to link itself to the footstool of the universal God!

## SERMON XVI.

## CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 PETER i. 1–11.

1. *The character of the persons addressed.*
2. *The duties enforced.*
3. *The necessity that exists for the performance of these duties.*
4. *The advantages resulting.*

THE revelation of God's doings and dealings in relation to our fallen world, suits and subordinates itself to the whole



system of **his** moral administration; and is admirably adapted to the high and weighty concerns, both of our **faith** and **practice**. In the morality of the Bible, faith has to do with principle and practice—with its influence. Faith makes an appropriation of abstract truths, and practice furnishes **their** evolution. It must be matter of general recognition, **when-**  
**ever** suggested, that dimness impenetrable, and light **inaccess-**  
**ible**, alternately guard the pavilion of the Almighty. It will be admitted further, that a similar mixture of the hidden and inscrutable is to be met, at every step, in searching into all the works and ways of God. The same hidden and unsearchable latency is specially attached to the religion of his Son. But enough is known and comprehended, to regulate safely and successfully, both our faith and morality. Without attempting, therefore, to tarnish the drapery of that **impen-**  
**etrable** curtain which God has drawn around himself, his **works**, and his ways, it behooves us to touch that which is tangible—to look at that which is visible—and compute that which is measurable. In view of this, we purpose, **by** the blessing of God, calling your attention to the nature and importance of practical Christianity, or the religion of the heart, as exemplified in the business and conduct of life, in all its naked and unassociated simplicity.

It is both an easy and a difficult thing to be a Christian—easy to be a *nominal* one, but difficult to be a real Christian. Easy to claim the character, but difficult to evince the validity of the claim.

In the subject proposed, our apostle introduces himself to the notice of mankind, as he should, *First*, by a simple designation of his person; *secondly*, by a brief notice of his character as a Christian; and *finally*, by calling our attention to his apostolic claims, as an inspired minister and writer of the New Testament. He then proceeds to shape his address, by confining it to Christians—addressing himself to those, and

those only, who were actuated by the same views and feelings by which he himself was influenced. There is here an important presupposition; viz., that there *was* a time when the persons addressed had not faith; and that the grace of faith is not of themselves. They had obtained the same faith with the apostle; and had obtained it in a similar way. This was not by flesh and blood—by human effort, or the ministry of earthly means, but by revelation of God the Father. We read also, of the strengthening of the apostle's faith; and the same remark holds good of all associated with him, in the bosom of the primitive Church.

I. *First, their FAITH.* It was of grace in its origin, genuine in its nature, Christian in its character, and saving in its issues. It was alike the result of thought and prayer on their part, and heavenly influence on the part of the Spirit. It was of the operation of God, assisting the understanding and the heart; and the energy that produced it was from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the faith of Abel and Noah.—It led the one to sacrifice, and the other to build. It was the faith of Abraham and Moses.—The one offered his son, and the other renounced the treasures of Egypt. It was the faith of Jacob and Joseph. The one wrestled with the retreating angel till break of day, the other resisted the golden tender of an imperial charmer. It was the faith of Caleb and Joshua.—The one *projected* and the other *fought*. The head and heart were in unison—faith and works essayed the same achievement, and were found in the same field of action!

The “grace and peace” in which they largely share.—The favor of God, and peace of conscience. The one secures, and the other inspires peace and moral quiet. These are “multiplied,” and this multiplication is the glory and crown of our rejoicing.

*Their knowledge of God, and the things of God.* They

know God by the revelation that is given of him. And this knowledge results in their peace of conscience, and pacification with Heaven, being applied by the power of the Holy Ghost. This knowledge is conscious and active. It leads to practical result, and visible fruit. They are interested with the characters of truth and righteousness—their graces and virtues—every good and perfect gift—the Christian temper pervades the inner man, and the Christian character adorns the outer.

*Their pursuit of glory and happiness; pressing onward in the path of life and obedience.* Without intermission or declination, they pursue a high course of unbending, moral rectitude.

*Their interest in the promises.* This interest is real and conscious. These promises relate to character, and not to persons. Their appropriation is characteristic and not personal. The promise is to “a servant of Jesus Christ,” and not to Simon Peter, as such.

*Their prospect of entire assimilation into the image of God.* They shall be ultimate partakers of the Divine nature, if they follow on to know, and walk in the ways of the Lord. This relates to the moral nature, and not the essential being of God. We imbibe the temper and disposition of Heaven, without sharing his attributes—the moral qualities of Deity, not his constituent nature.

*Their deliverance from under the dominion of sin.* Sin hath no longer dominion over them—they are not its servants. Their fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. They are under the dominion, and controlling influence of grace. They have received of the fulness, and are impressed with the image of Jesus Christ. The tyranny of sin is broken, and its lawless empire is subverted; and grace now reigns where sin once held its sceptred sway.

*Perseverance and diligence necessary.* Illustrated by examples.—Angels, who from half eternity, had shined in the light of Heaven and burnt in his love, fell—Adam, glowing

in the splendor of his Maker's image, fell from God and Eden! Enoch walked with God in progressive holiness three hundred years! Noah, after five hundred years of piety, sank ingloriously in brutal drunkenness! Lot, long a favorite of Heaven, fell by the same infernal stratagem! Moses, who had seen God in the Mount, face to face, and prayed, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" for sin, was doomed only to see the promised land from the storm-defying steep of overlooking Pisgah! Witness the grand falls, and scandalous apostasy of David, and his prosperous son Solomon! Look at the perfidy of Judas, and the defection of Peter! Look at Homogenes, Diotrophes, Hymeneus, Philetas, and Alexander, who all shipwrecked the faith of the gospel! Look at those women mentioned by St. Paul, who, though in the weeds of widowhood, had cast off the faith, and received damnation above ground! Paul himself, who finished his education in the third heavens, and formed his taste upon the maxims of Paradise, was liable to become "a cast-away," and labored that he might not! Look at the Israelites, even at the foot of the mountain, while God was yet speaking in tempest and flame, they fell into idolatry, and forgot their thundering guide above!

## II. *Further and new attainments are necessary.*

Religion in the heart and life is a progressive work. There is no stopping-place on this side heaven. He who calls a halt, does it at his peril. "I press toward the mark," should be the motto of every man's life.

By "diligence," we understand earnestness and activity. It is used emphatically. Your religious opinions must not slumber on your shelves, or sleep in your minds, without stimulating to proper and becoming action and industry. It should be your first and your last—your great business.

Diligence is *required*.—The duty is *ours*. Our responsibil-

ity and interest preclude the loss of time, or abuse of talent. All practicable diligence is in imperative demand, to secure that which, otherwise, cannot be secured. In every calling it is requisite, but preëminently so in religion. You are to pursue a course of diligence worthy of your faith—corresponding with your faith, and to which your faith binds you. Is religion a light?—It must shine brighter and brighter. Is it a grain of corn?—It must present “the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.” Is it a mustard-seed?—It must become a tree. Is it leaven?—It must ferment the whole lump. Is it a race?—It must be run. Is it a battle?—It must be fought. Is it education or scholarship?—We must learn the first principles of the gospel, and go on to perfection.

FAITH is first upon the catalogue of living virtues held in requisition. This is so, because faith is an initial, primary virtue—one of paramount value and importance in the Christian scheme. It is the great, leading precursor of all the virtues. It is a virtue that opens the heart for the reception of every other. It is one, without which, no other virtue can have a lodgment in the bosom of man. Faith, as a foundation, is valuable, but not without a structure reared upon it. Without works, or progress, it is “dead.” It is “holding the truth in unrighteousness.”

VIRTUE next claims your attention in this constellation of graces. It is courage—firmness of principle—unflinching resolution and ardor in doing, and unfaltering and constant fortitude in suffering the will of God. The Greek and Latin writers usually mean by it *courage* and *fortitude*. These are the sterner—the severer virtues of the Christian character. Our condition imperatively requires the exercise of this virtue. Instance, in the case of self-denial,—the world,—and the Devil.

*First, self-denial.*—The grand initiating maxim of the

Saviour—the plucking out of an eye that would fasten on a forbidden object—the cutting off of a hand that would pluck forbidden fruit—the amputation of a foot that would walk in an interdicted path. In this arduous undertaking of self-denial, you are to be both agent and patient—you must *do* and *suffer*.

*Secondly.* The *world* and its illusive and deceitful accompaniments, as well as its visible and open hostility.—Its long train of sinful—damning indulgences—the whole panorama of its pleasures, and wily allurements from God and virtue—the bustling arena of its politics and projects—the table of the heartless gamester, where villains meet to curse their stars and cheat their neighbors—your tippling-shops, those licensed stalls of hell, loaded with the curses of the widow and orphan—the theatre, the ball, the rout, the masquerade, and senseless ridotto; where so many disguised wounds are given to virtue, and insults offered to religion—where impurity presides, and corruption gilds the entertainment:—*these* he avoids as he would the fellowship of fiends!

*Thirdly.* The *Devil*, as such, in his proper character, and also in his various moral transformations.—Sometimes he comes with hell in his heart and hatred in his eyes—sometimes he uses the glozing lies of hell, as the incipient elements of moral seduction—now you see him, huge as a leviathan, tossing amid the foam of Norway; and again, he graces a devil's purpose with an angel's face—sometimes a proud cormorant perched on the tree of life, pleading the cause of sin and hell; and then he surprises you, like a lion of the desert when he springs from the thicket, and rampant shakes his brindled mane, and roars for prey!

KNOWLEDGE.—Know yourselves—God—and the gospel. These should be the great cardinal points of human study. Every philosopher should take himself for a text. Know yourself, and then you know the world. Study yourselves,

not only in your best, say your Sabbath attributes, but in every situation. Self-study is the safety-valve of character. It will enable you to repress the irregular risings of pride and vanity; and will help to keep all the passions within safe and allowable bounds.

TEMPERANCE.—As applied to the government of the body—moderation in application to the mind—in all things—especially in your cares and solitudes—in all the possibilities of enjoyment and action, you should care and sigh for nothing but what is good for you. In your plans and prospects, only attempt what is reasonable and practicable. In your hopes and expectations, do not be too sanguine—too imaginative—soar not too high, nor sink too low; but endeavor so to temper, level, and graduate your path, that you may escape all the avoidable, self-chosen ills of life. This, you are constantly to do, leaving your future destiny to the unfolding pleasure of opening Providence.

PATIENCE.—An important practical virtue. There is no ultimate success in religion without it. We need it in the active and passive discharge of duty. We are subject to wrongs and provocations—to want and disappointment—to all the ills and afflictions of life. Patience is the uncomplaining endurance of the necessary, providential evils of life, recognizing the source from whence they rise, and the purpose for which they are allowed—the improvement and final good of the sufferer.

GODLINESS.—Love to God, and obedience to his laws. It relates to the heart and life; to time, places, and circumstances. It must be universal and constant. It embraces life, in the progress and fluctuations of its unequal and varied current. It must not be partial, occasional, or accommodating, but constant, equal, and progressive. The *inward* glory of grace must be followed by the *exterior* glory of righteousness. You must cultivate the high morality of the Scriptures.

**BROTHERLY-KINDNESS.**—The kindness of brethren. It relates to the Christian brotherhood. Christians have one common Father—one common interest; and should never allow themselves to disagree, in any thing embraced in the great charter of their common hope. “Other sheep I have that are not of this fold.”—“In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.”—“So are we Christ’s also.” The bigot, instead of being a child of God, is a coöperator with the Devil, in the destruction of all that is good.

**CHARITY—LOVE.**—This extends to the whole brotherhood of the species. It knows no limits, but the verge of the green earth—the ulterior boundaries of the moral world. Man is its object; and it is not by any means material, what kind of a face—an African, or an Indian sun may have burnt on him—whether he shall freeze at the Pole, or burn under the Line—the snows of Scythia, the green fields of Europe, and sands of Africa, are alike to this heaven-born virtue!

Progress, in every thing that engages the heart of man, is attractive and interesting. Mark the stately edifice, rising from its deep basis to a splendid mansion! Look at the tree of the garden or the walk, renewing the signs of life, the opening bud, the expanding foliage, the swelling, ripening, coloring fruit! Mark the rough outline of the classic, or Hogarthian picture, resemblance growing into more perfect imitation, until the whole is glowingly filled and finished! Where is the parent who has not sparkled with delight, on seeing the pointing finger of the child succeeded by the prattling tongue, and all the opening powers of approaching manhood! But what are *these*, compared with growth in religion—with progress in heavenly attainments, when the Christian from lowly, successful exertion, gathers fresh glory, honor, and immortality! One moment he finds himself tranquilly seated in the green pastures of enjoyment, while the still



waters of comfort, as they steal by him, ripple on his ear in gurgling murmurs; the next, he finds himself regaled in the shade of his own vine and fig-tree, while each zephyr comes to him laden with tribute, and panting with incense! Now he is roused to action and conflict; but soon we see him triumphantly rolling over the field of battle in the chariot of salvation! Thus, impatient of delay, and full of immortal hope, he presses from one scene of enjoyment and preparation to another, until nature, finally vanquished with the weight of grace, groans to be transported into that happier age and better world, where he shall repose for ever in the visions of final beatitude!

### III. *These graces must be in you, and abound.*

They must be riveted upon the inner man. There must be a mysterious lodgment within; and their hold must grow stronger and stronger. There must be a dilation and expansion—a residence—an inhabitation, and a corresponding enlargement. Their *presence* is not only necessary, but also a growing influence, subordinating every motion and movement, to the high, and paramount claims of the will of Heaven.

You “shall not be barren” in the fruits of holy living; nor “unfruitful” in works of righteousness. “Barren” is properly rendered *idle* or *slothful*—doing nothing, or doing it to no good purpose.

The “lack of these things,” will blind you, not totally, but “seeing, you shall see not”—literally, *purblind*—you shall “not see afar off.” The visual ray shall lose its faculty of discrimination. The obscure shall preponderate over the clear and luminous. There shall be a defect in the apprehending or cognitive power of the understanding. The eye flinches from the appropriate objects of moral vision. The apostate winks; he dare not look truth in the face. He has an insensibility—an obtuseness of feeling—a deathlike slumber

seizes all the moral powers of his soul, that shall not only induce spiritual blindness, but forgetfulness—a loss of appropriate, grateful recollection. From his mind there is a dismissal of those high and heavenly topics, that once engrossed all his master passions and energies. His memory is not entirely destroyed, but the moral use of its functions has undergone an utter derangement. Remembrance has lost its redeeming effect upon his soul—it has lost its zest. That special cognizance of feeling is gone, and perhaps for ever! And this unhappy state of things is superinduced after the sanctification of the nature, and the moral expurgation of the conscience. It is not less difficult to retain these graces, than to acquire them at first; and their cherished retention is as necessary to salvation, as their primary acquisition.

Diligence must be given. Your “calling and election” must be rendered “sure,” or firm—solid. Both are now contingent. Fearful indeed is the conditionality attaching to both; and you are to secure the one and the other, by doing as directed in our subject. You are called by the gospel, and you are elected upon your obedience to this call. Here is an appeal to the power of choice with which God has invested the bosom of man.—A power with which Heaven has armed you to counteract the gracious ends of his own mercy; and this of strict necessity—not choice. It is an appeal to the high prerogatives of human volition.—Do these things, and you remain *unfallen*; do them not, and you will *fall* so as to be *fallen for ever*. Nine times the length of this terrene, into the dark profound of hell, would not measure the descending flight of a single hour! But upon the first supposition, you shall not fall from the favor of God on earth, or his promised rewards in eternity. If your happiness depended, exclusively, upon the Divine purposes, no admonition would reach you on the subject. But as you are to concur with Heaven, in the great work of your recovery, you are required

to make that *sure*, which is now *contingent* or undetermined. This election is, to the privileges of the gospel, and not absolutely, to eternal life; as Dr. Macknight has justly observed; as also, Dr. Lardner and other critics. If this election referred, absolutely, to *eternal life hereafter*, no one could read this epistle as addressed to himself, unless absolutely sure of his eternal election;—a thing, I apprehend, that no one in this life has ever claimed. It simply, therefore, denotes your election, as Christians, to the privileges of the Christian dispensation.

IV “FOR so :”—in pursuance of the apostolic plan. The “entrance” embraces death and judgment, as the great means by which, in the light of *passage*, we are introduced into the heavenly Jerusalem. By an “abundant entrance,” we understand happiness and triumph, in death and judgment. The Christian and death meet, like the sun at even supping with the ocean. What event befriends the good man more than death? It is the price of his admission—the gateway of his ascent into heaven. It is the dark valley through which he passes to the society of the blest, who will hail him with hearts’-greetings all divine. The enlivening radiance of eternal hope will gild the scene. Death with the Christian is an attitude of survey—a point of observation. Retrospection glances over the shadow of the past, while anticipation traces the outline of futurity. He is like Moses, viewing the promised land from the commanding height of Nebo. In the judgment, his triumph will be equal.—The flaming column of judgment, and a burning world—a God in grandeur, and the earth on fire;—*these* do not alarm him. The basis of his justification is the righteousness of his Redeemer, and he stands secure!

“EVERLASTING KINGDOM.”—By kingdom we understand the residence of the Deity—the heaven of the faithful, and

home of the Redeemer. But the kingdom belongs to Christ. It is his, because he founded it. It is his, because here he eminently resides. It is his, because he administers it. I will not say, there was a time when it did not exist; but in so far as we are concerned, it was founded for us in the blood of the great Mediator. Its mansions were prepared by him, as he himself asserts—prepared from the foundation of the world. All its thrones and all its seats are in his gift.

It is “everlasting.”—Its administration shall run parallel with the evolution of Heaven’s stupendous, eternal plans. It shall count the circling years of eternity; and while God shall live, and the pillars of his throne endure, this kingdom, in the hands of the great Administrator, shall flow on without stop or termination. It is not the kingdom of his mediation, remedial in its character and operations, and intended only to continue while time is the period of probation to man, and then lose itself in the great administration of the Son of God in heaven; but it is that kingdom prepared for the righteous, beyond the reach and ravages of time, at God’s right hand. The throne is one that no disaster can reach, no misfortune disturb. This kingdom is one in which no disorder can obtain—no rebellious subject live. There the glory of God shall surround your head, and his Paradise bloom at your feet;—and eternity is the tenure of its administration! It shall survive the heavens and the earth, and the torch of its perpetual illumination shall be lit up at the funeral-pile of nature! Then the Spring of eternity shall visit the mouldering urn, and its light shall dawn on the night of the tomb! Then the Christian shall be introduced into the beatific courts of the holy sanctuary, and arrayed for ever in the emblems of celestial triumph!

## SERMON XVII

## THE SOUL LOST.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—MARK viii. 36, 37.

SELF-DENIAL is the first practical step toward our recovery from the ruin of sin. It relates both to the mind and the heart. We must not lean to our own understanding, nor gratify our own natural passions and inclinations. The bearing of the cross, is the practice of those duties, and subjection to those sufferings that are contrary to nature, so far as may be required by the Christian profession. To follow Christ, is, to live in imitation of him, and to be actuated by the mind that was in him. The context of our subject teaches, that he who shall jeopardize his life and personal interests for the sake of Christ and conscience, shall meet with ample indemnification in the family and favor of Christ. You must not, if you resolve to be Christians, expect to tread on softness, and be refreshed by fragrance, at every step in the path and progress of duty and piety.

The soul of man is a principle of life—an immaterial, uncompounded something or substance within us, which we call spirit; and which is so called in the Scriptures—as also “the heart,” “the inner man,” etc. Inquiries relative to the *proper immortality* of the soul may be perplexing. It is enough that we know, our souls are immortal, and destined to live for ever. Some are of opinion, that the soul is naturally, and

*necessarily* immortal, independently of every other being in the universe. Others think, the human soul was created with *capacity* for perpetual being, and that its immortality depends upon the will of God. The proper immortality of the soul appears to be secured upon either of these principles. To begin with the last—we know it to be the will of God, that the human soul, in whatever moral condition, shall live for ever; for no truth, in all his word, is more clearly revealed. Or to attend to the first—the soul of man, created a simple, uncompounded, immaterial substance, called spirit, must necessarily be immortal; for simplicity of nature must insure immortality, under a government where the annihilation of a created being can have no place. The soul of man, not being compounded or made of parts, can have, in itself, no tendency to dissolution or decay; and under the government of God, where annihilation can have no place, the soul of man must live for ever.

It will hardly be necessary here, to oppose any thing to the degraded notions of the materialist, who thinks the soul a compound of matter, since the almost universal consent of ages and nations, has consecrated the opinion, supported by the best kind of evidence, that matter subject to any given modifications whatever, is incapable of thought, and can approach it no nearer than figure and motion.

Rejecting, therefore, the gross ideas of the materialist, we assume it as proved, that the human soul is immortal. For should it be naturally perishable, no philosopher has ever doubted, that God is able to perpetuate its existence for ever. That it is his *will*, we have already seen. The soul must, therefore, exist eternally. The soul is liable to no external violence, and has within it no principle of decay. The government of God does not admit of annihilation; and hence, the soul of man is necessarily immortal.

Our immortality is taught us by intuition and consciousness.

We *feel*—we *know* we are immortal. Nature never gravitates to naught. Her lessons are all founded in truth and reality. Her teaching is naked and eternal truth.

The soul of man possesses, eminently, three distinguishing qualities—intelligence, volition, and sensation—thought, self-determination, and motivity. It is capable of knowing, willing, and feeling—understanding, will, sensibility. The soul, in every respect, is properly immortal, and beyond the reach of decay. In God's universe, throughout all the amplitude of being, there are but two substances—matter and spirit. What is not, therefore, predicable of one, is so of the other. A thousand things are predicable of beings, whose existence is the subject of universal recognition, that cannot be said of matter, subject to any modification whatever, and must, therefore, be referred to spirit. Or, if reason do not satisfy you, we appeal to revelation, where it is unequivocally taught, that man shall live when the fabric of this fair world shall have passed away, and the destinies of men are known by the decisions of the last and final judgment.

Our remarks, thus far, have been principally confined to the soul's proper immortality; whether that immortality be arbitrary—depending on the will of God, or natural—owing to the indestructible principles of its nature. The latter opinion, we think the most philosophical, as well as scriptural; and hence, adopt it. The powers and attributes of the soul will be considered, as far as we deem a consideration of them necessary, in another place. An act of Omnipotence was necessary to create the soul; and nothing short of the same Omnipotence can uncreate or destroy. And as we know God does not intend this, we are assured of the immortality of the soul. That the soul is the principal part of man, is seen from Scripture.—“Into thy hands I commend my spirit”—David and Christ. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”—Stephen. Abraham gave up the ghost, and was gathered

to his people. This does not relate to death—the bodies of his ancestors. These rested—some in Chaldea, some in Haran in Mesopotamia, several hundred miles off. That this is the meaning of the word “gather,” is plain from Job.—“The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered;” and Christ in Isaiah—“Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.” Again, We shall “sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;” that is, with their souls. “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”—Their bodies were in dust; hence, the reference is to their souls. Moses was on the Mount of transfiguration, and yet his body slept in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor. Lazarus was in heaven, and Dives in hell, although their bodies were in dust and putrefaction. Without the soul, man would be a clod, and the world a desert!

II. THE SOUL'S VALUE.—It is property, literally, beyond all valuation. “Knowest thou the importance of a soul immortal? It is all price beyond.” The soul is but another word for one's self. Losing the soul, we lose ourselves. No consideration will be accepted “in exchange for the soul.” Its “redemption is precious, and ceases for ever.” The most extraordinary occurrence that ever took place in heaven or in earth, was in favor of the human soul. It cost death and blood, and war in heaven. It has engaged the adverse attention of God, men, angels, and devils. For near six thousand years, the controversy has gone round, from God to men,—from angels to devils—from heaven to hell!

The value of the soul may further be argued from its nature and attributes—from its capacity for enjoyment and suffering—from its oneness, or individuality—from its dominion over the inferior part of our nature—from the attention it has received from heaven, earth, and hell.

Judge of the value of the soul from the price of its redemption. The majesty and glory of Jesus Christ—he was sacrificed



for our souls. Mark the types that prefigured the sacrifice—the shadows that traced it out, and the ceremonies that depicted it, and by the pomp of the preparations, judge of the dignity of the substance prepared; and by the horror of the causes that contributed to his death, judge of the greatness of the event itself. Behold Jesus Christ on Calvary! Observe the opposition of devils and infidels to this method of atonement! And yet, all this was done for your souls! Weigh the objections, and by the greatness of the difficulties, judge of the mystery. Such is the value, God the just appraiser of things, has fixed upon our souls. The soul is essential to our identity.—So St. Peter—“While I am in this tabernacle.” By the glory of the shadows, judge of the splendor of the substantiation, in the great Christian Passover.

Such is the value of the human soul—it has cost Heaven more than all the works and possessions of Heaven beside. It has given rise to more grand and distinguishing displays of the perfections and glories of Godhead, than all that God has done or looked upon, since angelic natures first trembled into being before his burning throne, and beneath his kindling eye!

It was the soul of man that planted the fatal tree upon the ensanguined hill—the soul of man caused those sorrows that saddened the garden of Gethsemane, and those sufferings that rendered sacred for ever the hill of Calvary. I would prove the value of the soul by the agonies and consternation of nature—by the inversion of her laws—by the confusion of her elements—by the prodigies of the crucifixion, that threw the gazer on his knee—by the darkness that mantled the heavens in sackcloth, and prevented the sun from beholding the accursed parricide—by the vail of the temple, rent to become the habiliment of mourning for the murder of the temple’s God—by the shaking and convulsions of the earth, that declared it to be the bloodiest deed that ever stained her bosom—by the

crumbling rocks and opening graves and rising dead! I would prove it by the hymns of the blest, and the groans of the damned—by the refulgent splendors of heaven, and by the worm, the smoke, and the flames of hell! By every angel of light, and devil in perdition! And if after this, there is a man on earth who doubts the value of his soul, it would have been mercy in God to have made him a beast!

The soul of man has been the subject of counsel and legislation in heaven from everlasting. The most important enactments and fulfilments, have been in view of its recovery. The wisdom and goodness of God have reached the ulterior bounds of possibility—the *ne plus ultra* of propriety and safety, in preparation for our happiness. See the amazing powers and faculties of the soul—its spirituality—indivisible simplicity of nature—its capacity for high-wrought enjoyment, or unutterable wretchedness! It is the great principle of personal identity in man. The absence of this great informing principle, leaves the body exanimate, and transforms it into dust. Heaven has husbanded the interests, and pleaded the cause of the human soul for sixty centuries! Earth has exhausted her resources to supply its wants, and render it happy; and hell, with fiendish industry and untiring toil, has been seeking the ruin of the soul of man, ever since the apostacy! All intelligent creation, impressed with the sentiment, that man is of “more value than many sparrows,” has been laboring for the possession of his soul, in one way or another. Heaven and hell—all the dispensations of the Deity—the body as its habitation, and earth as the residence of both, prove the nameless value of the human soul.

Provisions made for the soul.—We are “bought with a price”—with the precious blood of Christ. He is our ransom—the propitiation for our sins. He, *he* paid the debt of our guilt. He rendered atonement to the Almighty. He vindicated the perfections of the Divine character, and the

principles of his government. Mark the will and purposes of God! The execution of that will, and the evolution of those purposes—the principles, provisions, and issues of the new and everlasting covenant, extending to all, and the wants of all! The most valuable person in heaven or earth, was sacrificed for the redemption of our souls. Christ procured us a title to heaven, and on the most eligible terms, proposes to furnish us with meetness for it. Eighteen hundred years ago, his truth to the world of man was, “All things are ready.” He has provided a feast for the understanding and heart—a supply for the exigencies of time, and the wants of eternity.

——“The ransom was paid down,  
Said Justice, Man! I’d fain know what you weigh!  
Compressed in wrath the swelling wine-press groaned,  
It bled and broke and poured the rushing purple (the flowing pardon)  
round.”

*Application of the provisions of grace.*—By this arrangement, our relation to God was changed—we were admitted to favor with the Divine Being through Jesus Christ, who was exalted a Prince and Saviour to give repentance to Israel. The sceptre of mercy was held out. The invitation of the gospel reaches us from the Divine throne. The evangelical mercy-seat is spread, sprinkled with the blood of atonement. A ministry of reconciliation is given us;—and our ruin is the grief and disappointment of Heaven. For you, God has “shaken the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land.” For this, he has said to one empire fall, to another stand. Gave the learning of the world to Greece and its empire to Rome—light to the Jews and darkness to the Gentiles.

“His kingdom, adverse fates and prosperous chance,  
Virtue and vice, good and ill advance.”

A war has been kindled between heaven and hell—a conflict of interests has ever existed—the controversy has

been woful and serious, in which heaven and hell have disputed the empire of the moral world.

*Its effects.*—Upon this plan God has lavished the wealth of his throne—has emptied the coffers, and impoverished the exchequer of Heaven. The universe is before the redeemed soul, a mirror—the Bible by his side, a directory, in which he may see reflected, in every place and in every form, the beauty, greatness, and grandeur of Jehovah. His affections and praises may rise sweeter than the incense of the morning, and make no unhappy harmony with the loftier music of heaven. Man was the great *end* of this earthly system. God has so provided for us, that we may be peaceful within, safe without, and conscious of immortality. The better part of our being belongs to futurity, but in the mock comedy of life, how many neglect the durable and steadfast objects of eternity, and go laughingly to hell!

To rescue the human soul, God has ordained the Christian ministry—the earth their parish, and the world their diocese. He has shed forth the enlightening influence of his Spirit, as the beams of heaven's luminary. You might as soon find in the forest, a tree never shaken by the wind, as to find a man with whom the Spirit of God has never striven. "Man's fates and favors are a throne in heaven—sky-born, sky-guided, and sky-returning!"

*Nature and duration of the loss of the soul.*

The lost soul is forsaken of God, and rejected by Christ. The Spirit of God has fled from him. He is given over to hardness of heart, and reprobation of mind, to believe a *lie*, and be damned. The loss of the soul implies the loss of celestial happiness—conscious pain and suffering—remorse and guilt—the horror of infernal society, together with a perpetual increase of sin and wickedness in hell for ever and ever! Let us *insist* on each particular. The Father ceases to draw—the Son to intercede—the Spirit to strive—there is

nothing within the range and operation of the covenant of grace, in any way advance of the happiness of those who are thus *given over*! The bliss of heaven is lost—the favor and fellowship of God—the light of his countenance—the joys of eternity—the society of the blest, and the songs of the redeemed—all Divine light and influence—all the means of grace—excluded the house of God for ever! To lose one's soul, is to lose those blessings, and to sustain those evils, the soul is capable of enjoying and suffering. The face of God is darkened with frowns—his heavens mantled with blackness. The paths that lead to his peace present many an inaccessible barrier, and the gates of heaven's glory enfold in darkness for ever! Shut out for ever from the busy hum of men, or city chime—the delights and amusements of society—nothing to divert, alleviate, or minister to its respite, the spectre of *unrest* for ever haunts the soul! It is a total eclipse—no sun—no moon!

But there is not only the punishment of *loss*, but of *curse*—actual suffering—conscious pain. The loss of the soul is an ocean of pain, on which you are destined to float, in the most horrid uncertainty, for ever and ever! Possess yourselves then of feelings and sentiments correspondent to your high destination! The scourge of hell shall lash and rend the damned in twain—I am tormented in this flame—the tongue parched—a place of torment—the breath of God, like a stream of brimstone, kindles the fire of the pit—a fire that burns to the lowest hell—they have no rest day nor night—into everlasting fire—their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched—they weep, wail, and gnash their teeth—the smoke of their torment ascends for ever and ever! Such is but a sketch from the burning page of God's description. Add to this, remorse and guilt—man shall know and feel in hell how he came thither—the predestination of God will furnish no plea; for comfort might live, even in hell, if the damned but knew

that the *will* of God, and not their *own*, originally had placed them there; but instead of this, all the remorseful damned, from the hoary antediluvian down to the last infidel in the camp of Gog and Magog, shall assuredly know that their own obduracy, and not the purposes of the Deity, had sealed their deep damnation!

Think too, of the infernal society! The soul, in its lost state, is said to be “tormented with the Devil and his angels”—to dwell among the damned, where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Our Saviour pronounces the way to hell *broad*, and tells us that *many* travel it. He assures us the gate is *wide*, and that *many* go in thereat. Losing our souls, we are to have our portion with hypocrites and unbelievers—the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God. Tophet, ordained of old for the reception of all the wicked, is made “deep and large.” The wicked in hell, are together with the beast and the false prophet. Such shall be our society in hell, if we lose our souls.

The damned grow worse and worse in tempers and habits. They curse their God and King, and look upward. The Scriptures assure us, that so far from being reconciled to God, they indulge in perpetual blasphemies. And should it be true, that “devil with devil damned, firm concord hold,” yet they increase in wickedness and alienation from God. And however the souls of men may relent in hell when it is too late, yet no change can take place, either in their nature or condition.

*The duration of hell's torments.* What shall I say here? Shall I compare eternity with the duration of the long-lived oak? the ancient castle of Trajan's Pillar? Pompey's Amphitheatre? the antiquity of the Truscan Urns? the foundations of Rome, or the Pyramids of Egypt? The illustration of Cyprian is too feeble. One atom of matter composing this globe annihilated every thousand years—the period consumed

before the annihilation of the whole, dwindles into diluted diminution, compared with eternity. Nor is the comparison of a late celebrated divine much better. In illustrating this subject, he supposes God to engage in the creation of a world like this—he names ages on ages, and millions of ages added to millions of ages; and supposes the whole to constitute a given period of time. He supposes God to consume this much time in creating one atom, and the same length of time in creating each individual atom, till the whole number of atoms necessary to compose a world like this shall be created. He then supposes God to be the same length of time in arranging the created particles, atom by atom; and finally supposes that God proceeds in the same way to annihilate the whole—all this duration is nothing but a point, in comparison of eternity.

“What is eternity? can aught  
Point its duration to the thought?”

The eternity, or duration of the soul's loss, can only be justified and believed, in view of the things that have been done, in order to its happiness. When the hopeless damned have lingered out a mass of ages, embodying millions and millions more, multiplied by millions and millions, and then inquire, when will our torments end? When will the duration of our misery close? For a moment, all hell in silence waits an answer; when lo! on the guilty ear of the damned, the clock of eternity strikes ONE! and an echo through all the gloomy caves of hell, returns in groans the melancholy roar, ONE!

When I have writhed ten thousand years in fire,  
Ten thousand thousand, let me then expire!”

Ye rattling thunders that rend the heavens—ye blazing lightnings that pluck up ponderous mountains from their solid basis, collect your utmost force, aim all your strength, and thunder me into nothing! But all is in vain. Throughout

the ever-dragging ages of eternitý, the lost souls exist in exile from their God! The face of God is set in blackness and blasting against them! Hell is their only home—remove is impossible!

Our best comparisons and illustrations are nothing but cyphers, in the arithmetic of eternity. The whole orb of *time* is nothing but a cypher—at best, a unit. The lost in hell shall for ever curse the day, and execrate the night of their birth. The venom of the undying worm, and the raging of the ever-kindling fire, shall be their constant companions.

The ratio of future *rewards* and *punishments*, in point of duration, is strictly *invariable*. The *two* are perfectly correlative; and as Baxter expresses it, there is “an exact agreement, or connaturality, between them.” In all the dispensations of the Deity, the measures of penalty are meted out, not upon the principle of *ad valorem* punishment, but to secure the ends of government; and the proportion is not fixed by duration, but by the *degree* and *intenseness* of the inflicted evil. As to the tormentors of the lost souls, we may suppose that the Devil and his angels will torture them, with the same unslumbering malice with which they pursued them in this world. The venerable Bede, on the “worm” and “fire” of hell, says, “The *worm* indicates the too late repentance of the damned, inwardly accusing; and the *fire*, the flames of hell, outwardly raging.” “A lake,” says Tertullian, “of ever-burning fire, fueled with incorruptibility!” Our Lord says, “Every one shall be salted with fire!” That is, as salt preserves the substance to which it is applied, so the damned shall continue immortal in the midst of flames! Man’s creation chartered him for immortality; and hell with all its horrors, cannot shorten the duration of his being!

*As compensation for the loss of the soul,—the futility of wealth and temporal good.* When Alcibiades boasted of his wealth to Socrates, he asked him to show him a map of the



earth. He did so. He then asked him to show him Attica. He did so, with some difficulty, as Attica was a small country. Socrates then requested this heir of fortune to show him his possessions on the map in Attica; but this he could not do, wealthy as he was. Apply this antithesis, ye lovers of wealth and opulence, to the subject before us!

Former enjoyment makes no compensation for present suffering. In life, we may have basked in the sunshine of fortune and worldly prosperity; but the recollection of all this avails us nothing in an undone eternity, where we are obliged to lie down with the damned, and feel the wrath of God for ever! In life, we may have boasted the enjoyment of plenty—been lulled in the lap of affluence, and revelled in spendthrift glory upon the spoils of Heaven's bounty; but in hell it does us no good! The world can never indemnify us for the loss of our souls. Were we to obtain the government of the universe by the sale of our souls, of what advantage could it be to us? These things are all of an earthly and perishing nature, and can never render happy, or supply the wants of an immortal spirit, pregnant with the fires and energies of an eternal, undying nature!

When the great Saladin, the Saracenic conqueror, had conquered Egypt,—passed the Euphrates, and subdued cities without number—had retaken Jerusalem, and placed himself at the head of a great empire,—when about to die, he called his herald who had borne his banner in all his battles, and ordered him to take a lance, and on the point of it hang his shroud, and proclaim—"This is all that remains of Saladin the great!" Alexander, after effecting the conquest of the world, sighed for another in which to raise his imperial standard—sighed for want of something to make him happy! Solomon, the richest Jew, and Ctesus, the richest heathen that ever lived, were both discontented and unhappy! And the former preferred an humble domestic retreat, where con-

tentment was, to the splendors of his palace, with all its superb equipages, and costly decorations; while the latter, tired of life, terminated it himself! Domna, a widow of Nicodemia, though immensely wealthy, at her death, left in her chamber, which was plundered by her persecutors, the Acts of the Apostles, two mats upon the floor, a wooden box, and an earthen censer! Such was the estimate this lady placed upon wealth, although hers was almost boundless. Instance the case of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, Herod, and others, all unable to count their wealth; and all unhappy!

That which satisfies the longings and cravings of immortal existence, must in itself be immortal. The soul is an immaterial principle; and all the bare materialism in God's universe cannot make it happy. Well has Virgil said, "O execrable love of money, to what wilt thou not impel the hearts of men!" How many thousands open their hearts to the demon of avarice, and sell salvation, as Judas did Jesus Christ, for thirty pieces of silver! But what were *his* advantages compared with *theirs*? I pity Judas, and turn my indignation against *them*! These disciples of mammon have lived in every age. In the reign of Vespasian, the Roman satirists called them "public bloodsuckers"—the sponges that absorb the wealth of society. How many thousands become rich by oblique means; and furnish their splendid apartments by lies and deceit—by treachery and oppression—oath and perjury; and yet, if they make a profession of religion, they never think of studying the elements of morality upon the Christian doctrine of restitution! Such money-mongers as these, will go to hell, whether they have been baptized or not.

It is recorded of Constantine the Great, that in order to cure a miser, he took a spear and marked out the size of a man upon the surface of the earth, and said to the heartless hoarder,

“Add heaps to heaps, accumulate riches, enlarge the bounds of your possessions, conquer the world, and *this* is all you shall have at last!” Let eternity, then, be the terminating ocean of the river of your thoughts! Look at the late hero of the fortunes of France—empires were his game and thrones his stakes—earth was his table and nations the dice with which he played; but he has withered, a blighted trunk upon a cursed root! Look at the dateless tombs of the Pharaohs—worms are their lords, and *they* the subjects!

The foregoing reflections are levelled at the vice of avarice; for multitudes now in the world, even Christians, (so called,) still love “the bag.” Heaven and earth are compassed, that they may *fill* it and *carry* it. The logic of this passion did not expire, when Judas returned his ill-gotten gain, and threw it at the feet of the priests. You should, therefore, estimate the value of wealth by its unsatisfying nature, the brevity of life, and its effect upon the passions and morals of the possessor. See the wealthling, then, in death; and hear the dying sob that heralds his way to hell—*hell*, a wide realm of wild reality—*hell*, where gnaws the worm that cannot sleep and never dies—*hell*, whose prisoners, riven by remorse, and writhing in woe—where darkness above, despair beneath, around you flame, within you death—*hell*! whose every wave breaks on a living shore, strewn with hopeless immortals! where the vengeance of Heaven sinks on the damned in mountains overwhelming. I cannot paint the burning wreaths, the fitful radiance, and ghastly revelry of hell. I can only point to destiny surrounding the knell of a ruined soul, as it is seen looming over the boundless sea of dim eternity! I cannot tell you how I feel when the sigh of despair falls on my ear, sad as the wave-uttered dirge of the ocean! I cannot paint the lightnings of judgment—those mystic gleams of God that dart athwart the gloom beneath, only to light the

path of those thunders begirding his throne, and point their direction in the exertion of their mingled might! Great God! what an overgrown accumulation of horror!

The “worm” and “fire” are used, it is thought, to denote two principal methods of reducing the human body to dust. The one by committing the body to the earth, and letting the worm destroy it; the other by burning it upon a funeral pile, as was frequently the custom with the rich and great. In the one case, the worm is supposed to destroy the body, and then die—in the other, the fire consumes the body, and then expires. Thus the *worm dies*, and the fire is *quenched*. But not so in hell—“their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Remorse shall prey upon the soul for ever, as the vulture is said to have gnawed the liver of Tityus.

“NEVER”—

“Where sinks the soul at that dread sound?  
Into a gulf—how dark, and how profound!”

“Hope never comes, that comes to all!”

The deep innavigable gulf of hell, without bank or bottom beneath; and heaven and earth joining to push you down—where dire shall be the tossing, and deep the groans of the damned—the understanding—the memory and fear of the damned—the scourge inexorable and torturing hour, shall call the damned to penance! Each victim fixed in the despair of his own destiny, like a solitary cloud, self-balanced amid a universe of gloom! Think of eternity with its abysses—the fiery lake with its flames—devils with their rage, and hell with its horrors! Think of the last vicissitudes of time, that shall put a period to the duration of the universe!

*Finally*, reflect upon God’s unwillingness that you should perish—the danger of your damnation—the practicability of an immediate return to God; and the exceeding great, and

eternal weight of weal or woe, depending on your choice! Mark the proximity of all-pursuing death! The boundless extent of truth and knowledge, which is hourly revolved by God himself, shall soon unfold to you in vindication of his plans and conduct. We have done our utmost—our last effort is with you. Heaven has no other argument to press; and the Bible no other motive to urge. If you perish, the provisions of God's covenant shall be inscribed on the ruins of your fall; and you shall sink down to damnation, with the waters of salvation purling in your ears! Of that dreadful place, the dark and dreary gulf of hell, I have no vocal powers to give you any adequate description. It is a place where the eye of the damned shall flash in frenzy—the tongue vibrate with the accents of malice, and the chains of despair clank in dreadful concert to the rage and blasphemy for ever current there! It is a dungeon, dark with crime—teeming with curses, and filled with fiends! Merciful God! and are human beings there! They are! Heaven at the sight is in tears, and a virtuous universe, God's creation, sobs and murmurs in sighs the funeral-dirge of a dying soul!!

## SERMON XVIII.

## WISDOM.

“The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners: but wisdom is justified of her children.”—MATT. xi. 19.

THE Jews are compared to quarrelsome children, who, when together in places of public resort and amusement, disagree as to the manner of amusing themselves. When airs of music called for dancing, as the game dictated, some refused; and when the mournful dirge was introduced, they were equally dissatisfied, and could not be pleased. Hence, the parable in the text. By “mourning” here, is, (in the application of the parable,) to be understood, the ministry of John; and by the “piping,” the ministry of our Lord. But the Jews, in their spleen, rejected both. This, however, is no argument against the truth and importance of Christianity.

1. We shall first attend to *the meaning and application of the term WISDOM, in the text.*

2. *The CHARACTER of her children.*

3. *Show how wisdom is JUSTIFIED on the part of her children.*

4. *The EVIDENCE and EXPRESSION of this justification.*

I. *The IMPORT of wisdom.*

By WISDOM, we are to understand, the subject and system of revealed religion—the gospel, or the Christian revelation, as exhibited in the Scriptures—the plan of salvation, as ad-

dressed to mankind, in the doctrines of Christianity—a scheme of good, in relation to our fallen family, instituted in view of their recovery, of which Jesus Christ is sum and substance; originally emanating from the throne of God, and now appearing on the faithful page of Scripture testimony. Wisdom is of various signification in the Scriptures; and its import is to be determined by the connection in which we find it. So, it sometimes means, the general influence of the gospel, upon the hearts and lives of men. Sometimes it means, a habit of piety, or the fear of the Lord. Once or twice, in the Scriptures, Christ is called Wisdom. It also, sometimes, means great attainments in some particular branch of inquiry. But more frequently, as in the text, it is used to denote the gospel, as a system of revealed, religious truth. It means, in the text, the truth of God approved of on the part of his people, and effectual to their salvation, in time and eternity.

It is the mind and purposes of God displayed in the Bible. It is that document which exhibits the might and mystery of his wondrous plans and achievements in behalf of rebellious, and alienated man. It embraces all that is essential in the faith of the New Testament. It existed before Greece had a name, or Rome was found on the page of history. It is the heaven-descended lore of undecceitful good. It yields a substantial produce to the good of humanity. It makes man what he ought to be. It is the doctrine of redemption, in all the truth and energy of its applications. It is that system of things that contemplates the recall of our exiled family; and shall circulate the glories of Deity among the worshippers of eternity.

This wisdom is not found in the land of the living. It is of Divine origin. “The depth saith, it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not in me.” It cannot be had in exchange for gold, for silver—the onyx, the sapphire, the coral, the topaz of Ethiopia. “Destruction and death say, we have heard the

fame thereof. It is kept close from the fowls of heaven, and hid from all living; but God knoweth the way thereof. It is a path untrodden by the lion's whelp—unseen by the vulture's eye." It is the mystery of godliness in an enlarged sense; even the hidden mystery of God. It is that "book which the deaf were to hear," according to prophecy; and that light in which those were to walk who lay *buried* in "the valley and shadow of death." It is the record of God's testimony—the light of salvation, shining in the Bible. Such is wisdom. It is the "one thing needful." The *unum necessarium* of man. It embraces religion, in all its parts and powers—in all its details and minutiae, as well as grand outline. It is the history of Heaven's love, and man's happiness. It is that system that embodies all the deeds and the doings of Heaven, in order to man's salvation here, and felicity hereafter. It inspires the hope of worlds unknown, and scorn of this. The charge of darkness falls on the boasted ages of Cæsar and Alexander. It is the light of Heaven, illuming the dark places of the earth, and the habitations of cruelty! It is lovely as a field of emeralds embossed in a bed of gold!

## II. *The CHARACTER of her children.*

By the children of wisdom, we are to understand, the "children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." The truly pious and good, the world over. The text embodies the whole election of grace—every member of the Redeemer's family—awakened, renewed, called, chosen, and faithful. Those who constantly aim at piety on earth, and rest in heaven. The good of every creed, color, clime, and latitude. All that have been born of God, and walk before him in "newness of life." All who have passed under the bond of his covenant, and continue in the relation, "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Such as, after making



a profession of religion, keep the noiseless tenor of their way, along down the cool, sequestered vale of life—who keep the line of rectitude, without declination—who press onward and forward, until death intercept the path of their pilgrimage, and a voice is heard from heaven, “Come up higher.” Those who draw the sword, throw the scabbard, and disdain all capitulation with their foe—*these*, and *these only*, are the children of wisdom. Those who vow an eternal hatred to sin—who exercise a wholesome jealousy over themselves—who lead a life that wins the skies—who move in slow, but firm battalion. There must be a perpetual and unfailing habit of subordination to God’s law. The child of wisdom gives to God, his fond and first regard. His virtues are bodied forth in *deed* and accomplishment. He practices all the chastening and subduing virtues of the New Testament, seen in full and flourishing display. There must be a unity and effectiveness about his doings. He must look upon this world, as a passage to another. He lives for God, and leaves the event with him.

### III. *The JUSTIFICATION of wisdom.*

1. First, in her *doctrines*. The Divinity, Messiahship, and character of Christ—his mediation—the work of the Spirit—man’s natural state—his state by grace—in life, death, and eternity. All these essential doctrines of Christianity, are implicitly believed by the children of wisdom—by all Christians. The doctrine of the trinity—the incarnation—atonement—agency of the Spirit—nature and necessity of regeneration—these are fundamental doctrines, necessary to be believed—essential to the existence of religion.

These essential doctrines, intimately connected, and dependent one upon another, all enter componently into the moral association of the whole. Each part is component—every principle is relative. To affect one part, is to affect the

whole. We have the same warrant—the same patent for the whole, that we have for a part. The rejection, or want of confidence in a part, must necessarily lessen our regard for the whole. If we embrace Christianity as a whole, we necessarily embrace its parts. Not to embrace it as a whole, is not to embrace it at all.

The children of wisdom must believe the incomprehensible fact, that the infinite, everliving God, exists in the mysterious distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They receive this, because Heaven has taught it, although it be an acknowledged problem in the science of being. This fact can be accredited, in the same way that we admit, upon ordinary principles, the undoubted fact of man's personal, and individuated identity, at the same time that we know him to be inexplicably compounded of matter and spirit. It is a fact, the mysterious mode of the existence of which, we know not, nor are we anxious to know. We believe a thousand facts without comprehending them, or knowing any thing about their *modus* of existence; and so of this great truth, fairly and warrantably taught us in the word of God.

The incarnation of the Son of God is received as a mystery of grace—the only efficient means of grace—the exclusive method of our recovery—the mysterious process by which grace is conveyed to our fallen world.

The Spirit's efficient, and impulsive operations are essentially necessary. No good intentions, notions, or purposes *can* exist, without the Spirit's gracious agency. Every wish we have to get to heaven, was born under the kindling eye of God. His efficient visitations, are essentially necessary, in order to embellish the heart and life of man, with the strength and sacredness of Christian virtue.

The Christian religion is distinguished from all others, by its peculiar and Heaven-indited truths. The doctrines of Christianity are appropriately singular. They constitute a

grand and peculiar system—a system *sui generis*—by itself. It is without an image and without a parallel in the universe; and a Christian in his moral aspects in relation to heaven and earth, differs from every other subject of God's government.

2. "Wisdom is justified of her children," in reference to the *precepts* and *obligations* of the gospel.

Contrast the weakness of human nature with the provisions and aids of Christianity. By dint of natural ability we *cannot*, but by moral, derived aid, we *can* attend to all the duties and obligations of the gospel. Christianity requires nothing impracticable. She furnishes resources for every duty and labor, and all the obedience she demands. In this, the *proportion* of the gospel is clearly seen. The *helps* of Christianity are graciously extended and apportioned to all, in whatever condition. If God says to man, "Seek ye my face," his Spirit prompts the heart to respond, "Thy face, O Lord, will I seek." If we "work out our salvation," it is because "God works in us."

"He openeth their ear to discipline," and *then*, they hear. He "opens the eyes of our understanding," and *then*, we see. He "shines into our hearts," and *then*, we have light. We are "created anew in Christ Jesus," and *then*, we practice good works. We are made "light in the Lord," and *then*, we "walk as children of the light." When the "Father draws," we come to Christ. When God calls, we obey his voice. The aids of Christianity are every way suitable to the moral exigence of our nature. The obligations of religion, can never exceed the possibilities of human attainment and accomplishment, when human nature is aided by the grace of God. That which we were not able to do, in our lapsed and fallen condition, God enables us to perform; and the ability always accompanies the obligation. For every work, we are furnished with the moral materials, and the requisite resources. God cannot ask man to do, what the limited

capabilities of his nature must for ever deter him from doing. God himself cannot impose an obligation, unless such obligation correspond with the ability given, and the opportunity allowed his creatures. If God should command me, without affording, or intending to afford the requisite power, to arrest the sun, or adjourn the moon in her course, my own irresistible sense of the immutable rules of right, and laws of being, would tell me I was mocked. When any command exceeds ability given, the performance would be miracle; and would amount to a mock transfer of the prerogatives of Deity. The grace of God must reach, and force a passage to the heart. The will of man is the faculty of dominion, and it must be subdued.

3. Wisdom is justified of her children, in relation to the *rewards* and *punishments* set forth in the Scriptures.

To be exalted to the enjoyment of unmixed happiness above, is the promised reward of the righteous; while the wicked shall be ingulfed, in the ruin of the nations and families that forget God. All this, however, is right and equitable; and the latter circumstance is equally necessary with the former, to preserve order in the Divine kingdom, and promote the happiness of its numerous, loyal, and obedient subjects. Every perfection of the Divine nature, must harmonize, and be brought to bear upon the principles of the Divine government, in the *order* of its administration. The goodness of God requires not only that virtue should be rewarded, but that vice should be punished. God is a God of *order*; and *good order* requires, that the rebellious in the Divine kingdom, receive answerable and condign punishment for their crimes. And indeed, it seems possible to resolve the punishment of the damned itself, into the goodness of God. Order, in his kingdom, is necessary to the happiness of his obedient and loyal subjects. But order cannot be maintained,

without removing the wicked out of the way, and conducting them to the abodes of punishment. So that, should justice delay, mercy herself would seize the uplifted bolt, and speed the lingering blow! Thus God appears “full-orbed, in his whole round of rays complete;” and the pious on earth and saved in heaven, unite with angels, and acquiesce in the entire of Jehovah’s administration; saying, “Amen, alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!”—No objecting—all are satisfied!

The same goodness that provided for the happiness of *one*, provided for the happiness of *all the race of man*. The same difficulties and facilities attend upon the path of all, in the way to heaven or hell. None perish, but those who render their damnation necessary, that God may be *good*—that he may be *true* and *just*, in all his ways. What is done, is done for the good of the whole. Public safety and public good are consulted. God looks at things in all the minutiae, and generality of their bearings. He consults the whole, and every part, in all he does.

4. Wisdom is justified of her children,” in the whole *administration of the Divine government*, the universal extent of which reaches all—is perpetually present with all—is administered, with sovereign independence, in relation to all created nature, intelligent and unintelligent. And though mystery profound, connects with the Divine administration, all is equitable and beneficent.

The ubiquity of the Divine administration, comprehends the entire of this world’s population, and the range of its territory. Earth is the temple of his presence. God is ever present—ever felt. His government is always brought to bear upon our happiness. God consults not the caprice of man, nor the will of nations, good or bad; but moves on with unbending sovereignty to the august point of consummation

Clouds and darkness surround his throne—his footsteps are in the deep—his providence is inscrutable, and his “ways past finding out.” He is wise in counsel—the means of his administration are efficiently and appropriately calculated to bring about the end he has in view. His beneficence extends to all. His administration is conducted with inexorable justice, and uncompromising holiness. Its efficiency is unchecked and progressive. It shall extend, not only through all time, but while the interminable ages of eternity shall endure; and if we live submissive and faithful subjects, we shall gain eternal felicity as our reward.

#### IV The *evidence* and *expression* of this justification.

This is shown by the experience and conduct of all the faithful, in different parts and periods of the world. They have so expressed themselves, and been so understood. Notice the Christian in his conviction, conversion, and perseverance—in his death—his long confinement in the tomb—his judgment at the bar of God—his eternity. He approves the conduct of Heaven. Even when he feels an infusion of wormwood and gall in his soul, it is a sweet remorse; and when he retires, like Cowper’s smitten deer, “with many an arrow deep infixed,” he glories in the wounded spirit he carries about him; and blesses Heaven for those compunctious visitings of the reproving Spirit of grace and of God.

The Church of God justifies and approves the Divine administration—the Church in all the progressive stages of its existence, from its early establishment in the family of Adam, down to the present hour, when the ample limit of its embrace encircles millions, and millions in addition,—in every variety of condition—in prosperity and adversity—in peace and in trial—amid all the vicissitudes of fortune and fate that checker her history, from the period when time was *young*,

down to its *close*—the *Church of God*, in all time, and under all circumstances, has uttered her voice, in approval of the doings and administration of Heaven.

This approval of the Church has been expressed in the registry of her faith—the manuals of her devotion—the patience, resignation, and sufferings of the saints—in the last faltering accents quivering on the lips of dying martyrs;—and when the angel of death shall close the eye of the saint, in the slumber of his long and last repose, the language of his heart shall be, “My Father does it all”—“Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!” And the same approving joy shall be felt, when the spring of heaven shall visit the mouldering urn, and the light of eternity shall dawn on the darkness of the tomb!

Wisdom was justified of her children, from the death of Abel down to the last child of faith under the Adamic economy.—From Noah, the orphan of the old world and father of the new, down to the calling of Abraham.—From the calling of Abraham to the giving of the law—from the giving of the law to the conquest of Canaan—and from this to the days of David, and thence to the Messiah—from the birth of Christ to the triumphs of Christianity in the Roman empire; and from that period, during the dark ages of the Church, to the time of the Reformation; and from the birth of Protestantism, to its recent triumphs in almost every district of the globe!

The attachment of the Church to the doctrines and duties—the facts and morality of the gospel, further evinces the truth of the text.

The obligation to engage in expression of approval of the Divine administration, extends to every portion of Heaven's dominions—every island and every ocean should render him homage—all creation—intelligent and unintelligent—the

heavens of the Lord must sing, and the earth leap for joy! We would press nature into this service—we would have realized all the personifications of Scripture prophecy—let the trees of the forest clap their hands, and the isles be glad at his presence—let the little hills shout on every side, and the valleys covered with corn, send forth their notes of rejoicing—let the sun and the moon praise him, and the stars join in the solemn adoration—let the voice of “glory to God” be heard from every mountain and every waterfall, until all nature—the mighty systems of infinity, animated by the presence of a presiding Deity, shall burst into one loud, and universal song of gratitude! Until the voice of salvation and praise shall be raised by every tongue, and sounded by every harp—until all beings and all natures shall lift the bold strain, and raise the exulting symphony, until the tide of ages shall roll away! God’s accountable creatures shall be summoned to their last reckoning—the history of his administration shall be wound up, and a voice of thunder from the temple of eternity, shall proclaim the closing scene of his triumphs—“It is done”—until, *viva voce*, both worlds, heaven and earth, shall exchange the shout that was heard by John in Apocalyptic vision, “Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!” And when the final catastrophe of the universe shall have rolled the vast volume of desolation through the heavens, and put out its visible splendors for ever, then shall the song of this joy be heard, and perpetuated in the city that hath foundations—that temple of which the Lamb is the light, and about the throne of which, shall unfold for ever, the final visions of delight;—*then*, when our names are enrolled in heaven’s calendar,—when we are entitled to the treasures, and numbered with the princes of a better world, and heaven’s millions shall loud acclaim the praise of Him that sitteth on the throne, abroad o’er the distant heights of eternity, *then*



the justification of the great Administrator, in all his deeds and his doings, shall constitute an essential element, and exhibit a prominent feature, in all the themes and declamations, the hymns and the harpings of the heavenly world, where the grandeur and glory of Godhead shall be seen by the nations of them that are saved, in bright and overpowering manifestation for ever !

## SERMON XIX.

## CHRIST OUR LIFE.

“He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.”—1 JOHN v. 12.

THE blessing announced in the text, is an assemblage of all those traits of mercy, and demonstrations of kindness, that distinguish the redemption of our guilty world.

I. “He that hath the Son, hath life,” *because he is in friendship with Heaven.*

Man had sinned; and as his sins had exposed him to the wrath of God, so they invited the execution of Heaven’s vengeance upon him. Angels hung in silent horror over the spectacle of his ruin, and God himself paused in the progress of his deliberations, to survey the magnitude of the impending curse about to be inflicted; when lo! the silence of heaven was broken by the accents of redemption—“Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!”—This was the language of him who is our life.—“Angel of death, bearing the sword of my Father’s vengeance, let it fall on me!” “I will sustain the overthrow, and rescue the real offender!” There was a loss of primeval honor—a change of original destiny, but all that was lost in Adam, has been recovered, with boundless increase, by the mediation of Christ.

He who satisfies the demands of justice in behalf of man, must be *one*, in law, with man. To the living tenderness and dying anguish of Jesus Christ, we owe *all*. The world was

warring against God, under the waving standard of defiance. At the fall of man, God's impatient mercy hastened to reveal the promise, that there might be no interval for despair. Man was like a weed flung from the rock on ocean's wave to sail. Upon the first defection of our race, the principle of spiritual life became extinguished, and the reformation of the heart is as impossible to man, as the reänimation of his body. As well might he undertake to change the hue of Ethiopia, or deprive the leopard of his spots!

To "have the Son," implies faith in Christ; and this implies, that we depend upon his atonement and sacrifice, for life and salvation. It is in this way we approach him, until God becomes our reconciled Father and Friend. We enjoy the friendship of Heaven, because our sins are forgiven us, and we are received into favor with God. We are hereby furnished with a *legal* capacity for heaven—a title-deed of entry. But we must also have a *moral*, and personal capacity for heavenly enjoyment.

Life means happiness—salvation from sin—a state of conscious and rejoicing fellowship with the God of heaven. Jesus Christ is the Author and Fountain—he is the way to life. He purchased its attainment on the part of man, and furnishes the requisite title. All the springs and treasures of happiness are in him. He that hath the Son, living and reigning in him by faith, hath the beginning, and shall experience the fulness of life. In the death of Christ, antipathies become affinities, contrarieties centre, and impossibilities meet.

In order to friendship with Heaven, two things were necessary. *First*, that man should be redeemed from the curse of the law. *Secondly*, that a corresponding change of nature be superinduced. The one is effected by the death of Christ; the other by faith in his atonement. Now, the exulting caves of hell no longer clamored for joy, as they did when man was driven from the seraph-guarded verge of Eden. The ampli-

tude of the charter—its largeness and universality—extends to *all*.

The circumstances under which man sinned, rendered the bestowment of mercy improbable, and its ready and abundant display the more remarkable. Goodness and severity mark the conduct of God in relation to all his creatures, in whom is combined a mixture of good and evil. In this, the infinite, and uncompromising purity of Heaven, is strikingly displayed; and we have an example of it, in the flaming sword and cherubim, appointed to guard the way of the tree of life. The sword symbolized the justice of the Deity, and the cherubim, his mercy in relation to man. The language of the one was—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The language of the other was—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

It was for our recovery, the chariots of heaven made so many visits to our earth. The promise of redemption is the day-star of our hopes, and the pavilion of our peace—a note that thrilled the drowsy slumbers of the soul! Reason asserted her claims, and philosophy opened her schools in vain! Would you prevail with Heaven, you must lift up the offering of Calvary in the holy places! These constitute the grand institutionary principles of our religion.

II. "He that hath the Son, hath life," *because he has the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins.*

The tear that trembled in the eye of penitence is wiped away. "And being reconciled to God"—"He hath sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of his Son." The fact that we are forgiven, is revealed to us by the Spirit. We are *assured* by the gift and witness of the Spirit, that we are accepted in the Beloved; and thus we have the knowledge of salvation. We live *in Christ* and *to him*, and so have life. *First*, we are forgiven; *secondly*, we *know* it. We have a splendid mass of

outward, external evidence, preëminently striking and forcible in its nature, the design of which is, to show that the believer in Christ, is freely forgiven his sins. But besides this, we have an inward, unerring consciousness of our acceptance with God. The convictions of the mind, and the feelings of the heart, are as well known, and as well ascertained, as the sensations of the body. The blind man—the woman bowed down with eighteen years' infirmity, and the cripple at the gate, did not know their cure more assuredly, than did Paul his conversion, when a descending flood of light from heaven burst upon his vision!—or the jailer, when God broke his heart by an earthquake, and bound it up by the advice of his prisoners!—or Peter, when a look from Christ explored the whole anatomy of his heart, and sent him out to *weep*! The change is a conscious one, and many and distinct are its legitimate effects.—O'er earth, a canopy of glory, heralding the path to heaven—an effulgence, broad as creation and clear as heaven's light—the harp of Judah and apostolic tongues have pealed it in blissful unison!—David when his feet merged from the pit—Isaiah when a coal warm from heaven's altar, thrilled a hallowed glow through all his soul!

Every redeemed spirit will partake of the joy, and every angel will sweep on his golden harp, with a bolder hand, the deep-toned anthem of redemption—"The dead is alive, the lost is found!" You welcome the letter, and inhale the spirit of the New Testament—an *echo* within of the *voice* of inspiration without—bliss-thrilled bosom! In morals, we only *know* what we *feel*. Impression is faith—faith is the perceptive grasp—the appropriating apprehension of the mind. Grace is to the heart, what the seal or intaglio is to the wax; it leaves an impression, felt and known and well defined—as clearly perceptible, as the affection of love or the passion of anger. The effulgence of the Divine countenance beaming on the mind, floods it with certitude and bliss—with the ecsta-

sies of heaven—the joys of immortality! The heart beats high with an impulse—a palpitation received from God. This assurance is founded upon the testimony of God—upon faith, character and feeling.

III. “He that hath the Son, hath life,” *by reason of the sanctification of his nature.*

This work is further carried on in the perfect renovation of our nature. We grow in grace, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. All the graces of the Spirit, and all the Christian virtues, harmoniously unite, and emit their blended radiance in the life and conversation. You are now but the miniature of what you may be. Purity is your being’s end and aim. Angels, without it, are devils; and with it, men are angels.

That we may enjoy heaven, there must be a personal adaptation, on the part of the occupier, to the kind of happiness current there. The heart must be made a fit recipient for the impression of heavenly glory. The character and taste of man must be sorted to the nature and circumstances of heaven. Holiness must be the rule of our actions, and the measure of our duty. Our former proposition freed the sinner from the guilt of sin; this frees him from its power and pollution. The one dethroned the infernal monster; and the other kills, and entombs him. That conveyed the favor, and this imparts the temper of heaven. The one gave you privilege, and the other gives you “power to become the sons of God.” Without *this*, you have the carcass without the spirit—the altar without the fire—the temple without the glory; you magnify this moment into ages, or reduce eternity to a shadow! God has scattered the flowers of allowed gratification over your path, but does not allow you to sin. Seek this holiness, or prepare for the curse of the Laodicean—the utter rejection of indignant Heaven!

Life is a theatre of action and of interest. Let not Christian lips be heard to use the dialect of devils! Let not the professed saint display the temper of hell, in a tone that would shock the organs of the damned! Such saints, will plunge unwept and unremembered into hell! Their life, dull and inactive as the winter state of a Norwegian bear, shall end in gloom! Fashion may sanction crime, and folly celebrate it, but touch it not. Go on like the soldier, and let the outposts of to-day be the trench of to-morrow. Your piety must be of standard weight and sterling value. You must rise above the level of your times. You must reject the impurities of sense, for the pleasures of the sanctuary; struggle with the flesh within, and the world without. Your passions must not be in insurrection with the Spirit of God, or the claims of Christianity. We are poisoned in the root, and are all, by nature, envenomed branches. The parent root was "the vine of Sodom," and we are the "grapes of gall." We existed in Adam, representatively as our moral head, and the law reached and affected us equally with him. He was our natural head, and we seminally belonged to the original stock. And hence, the moral taint of his nature pervaded ours, and is necessarily communicated to posterity. Human nature existed in Adam entire, and the moral complexion of *his* nature, essentially and constitutently considered, must be *ours*. The fountain was imbittered, and so must be the streams. If it be objected, that he might transmit his purity, we reply, grace is extraneous, and belongs not to his nature. Our restoration is "through faith," that it might be "by grace," and that the idea of transmission might be precluded for ever.

Religion, that often wraps the live-long day in one swell of emotion, should expiate for ever, and, without failure, flow in the service of God. Move forward, then, with hopeful and assured footsteps in the service of God, with your hopes

planted in a soil where nothing dies. God's mercy is a holy mercy; it pardons, but never sanctions imperfection; and the sanctified Christian is without disguise. He is willing his soul should have windows, and his heart be a transparency, that all might see what is going on within.

IV "He that hath the Son, hath life," *because he has the presence, protection, and support of Jesus Christ.*

Christ becomes his "wisdom, his sanctification, and his redemption." Among the whole number of the faithful, he diffuses the intimacy of his presence. He saves them from the omission, and leads them to the performance of duty. He sustains them in the good and the right way, and leads them on, "in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake." Amid every variety of temptation and difficulty, they pursue their firm and unfaltering course. When all is bitterness within and desolation without, though you dwell in a hovel on earth, you have a throne in heaven. Look forward, then, to the reversionary wealth of the kingdom of heaven—take the sword of the Spirit, tempered in the fire of the altar, and your bruised bones shall leap for joy. Shod in celestial panoply, you must breast every storm, and break every bar! Let vice everywhere be awe-smitten by the dignity of your demeanor, and oppressed virtue lift up her head! Wherever you live, in this arid world, let it be a spot of moral verdure; consecrate the years of your being to God; make religion the business and the delight of life; trample alike on the world and on the tomb, and pursue with undeviating step, your march to glory! Whether you wander in the desert of the Arab, shiver amid the snows of the Pole, or sigh in the sunless, cheerless hut of the Western savage, Christ is your life! If you suffer, recollect you shall spring from the rock of punishment to thrones of joy! Amid the brightness of your hopes and the shadows of your fears, with the path of virtue



strewed with flowers, and the rewards of eternity planted at the goal, let religion rear her altars in the high places of your heart and life, and there shall be no cloud, in which you cannot see a rainbow!

V “He that hath the Son, hath life,” *by reason of his vital union with Christ his living Head, and obedience to him.*

All Christians belong to Christ by many a mysterious tie. He is the head, of which they are the body. He is the “true vine,” and they are “the branches.” He is King in Zion, and they, his liege and loyal subjects. The union is intimate and vital—“Because I live, ye shall live also.” This union is the foundation and height of Christianity. The Christian rests in full and filial dependence upon the Holy Spirit. God asks of the heart that receives it, every beat and movement, and he will flood its every sensibility with the spring-tide of ecstasy!

How intimate the union between Christ and the believer! Heart meets heart in amity sincere. Maintain this union, and your habitation shall be, like the *oasis* in the desert, a spot of fertility amid surrounding barrenness! You have attached yourselves to the fortunes of one who had not “where to lay his head,” but whose wealth is now wide as the wants of the redeemed. Difficulties shall flee before you, like the army of Sennacherib before the sword of the destroying angel! You must not aim at the stipulated scantling of bare-weight duty. You must suffer without even the comfort of a witness. His grace will come like the dew to fainting flowers. You shall be supported in your title to heaven, only as you are found in the path leading thitherward. Your names *may* be transmitted from the foot of a creed to the dark roll of condemnation! But rest in unquestioning dependence upon Heaven, and in the last hour all will be well! Shun vice, as

you would the serpent of hell; its shade, like that of the upas tree, is inviting, but the retreat is death! Your union with Christ will furnish the motives and power of obedience; but if these motives and this power be abused, by the express command of Jesus Christ, this union shall be dissolved.

VI. "He that hath the Son, hath life," *by reason of his triumph in death.*

To the Christian, death can do no harm; he is disarmed of his strength. Though you meet death, forgetting and forgotten, you shall hear, unmoved, the last accents, and receive the last embrace of affection, gratefully recollecting that the clod that shall conceal your mouldering relics, shall not terminate the prospect that beguiled your pilgrimage here on earth. The poignant griefs that infest the chamber of death, shall be dispelled by the glories that lie beyond the grave. All participate in the destiny—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." How hard the separation of the grave! the adieus of affection!—futura, a gulf whose dimensions no eye can take, and on whose misty surface, no wreck is seen! Hope in death is a Heaven-appointed solace. The Christian falls asleep with praises in his mouth and glory on his tongue! Angels bend from the golden walls of the holy city, to invite him to a participation of their joys; every earthly object fades on his eye, and death darkens the whole field of vision; but this is only to open up an interminable prospect in glory everlasting!

Death is a storm which wafts us into port. We die to swell Immanuel's retinue, and wear his livery in heaven! The disconsolate mother may weave the shroud of her daughter, and the bereaved father plant the cypress at the tomb of his son, but if these young immortals have died in Christ, all is well! Children may pillow up the dying head of an earthly parent, (as I have done,) and weep upon their

graves, but if they have gone to Christ, it is "far better." Such a death is more to be desired than all the gold that misers ever counted, or the crowns that tyrants ever bestowed! It is death that tries the soul, and puts the destinies of the spirit at issue. This trial shall end in glory.

Look at the proto-martyr Stephen—heaven beaming in his countenance, and glory waiting to wreath his brow! Look at the prophet of Israel, as he drops his mantle on his pupil, and mounts the whirlwind from the bank of Jordan! Look at Paul in prospect of the fires of martyrdom! Here is real majesty! Heaven-conferred—heaven-descended dignity! Such is the triumph of the martyrs! They have stood unbowed beneath "the ills upon them piled!" They have hurled defiance in the teeth of their judges—spoken terror to their accusers and executioners—magnanimously braved the horrors of the gibbet and the rack, and shouted the hopes of glory amid the flames that consumed them!

VII. "He that hath the Son, hath life," *because of the resurrection from the grave, through Christ.*

The dominions of death are shaken to their centre—his sceptre is broken, and his throne subverted—a change that shall pour the health of immortal youth through all your frame. The Christian hope of the resurrection gilds the couch of the mourner and grave of the dead. At death, Christ will take the believer to the bosom of his mercies for ever. The grave is a responsible debtor. We sink a *cloud*—we rise a *star*! We fall a *cottage*—we rise a *palace*! The resurrection will cheat the grave and elements of their prey. Your God-erected forms shall spring to life—death shall be converted into hymns and sceptres! The bow of promise is seen arching the heavens and reaching down to earth to impart its radiance to the gloom of the sepulchre!

VIII. *This life is perpetuated in heaven for ever.*

There the sackcloth of the penitent shall be exchanged for the robes of glory; and every tear you shed on earth, shall be a gem in your crown in heaven. Yours shall be the crowns, the sceptres, and the palms of Paradise! In a little while, Arcturus with his sons, Pleiades and Orion, will be extinguished for ever, but this affects not you. You are the expectants of this bright reversion. Already you see the descending vision of this heavenly city. Throned amid the principalities and powers of heaven, you shall breathe the air of the Mount of God! When the songs of angelic and Christian joy shall rend the vast concave of heaven—when the Heaven-furnished manna, and the white stone of rewarded excellence, shall be given you, this is the triumphant climax of human felicity! The boundless comfort and infinite number of heaven's glories open in prospect before you—now loudly responds the echoing hymn, amid the shouting cherubim and seraphim! The Sabbath of eternity shall not be followed by a week of toil and care, but throned and crowned in heaven, you shall go out no more!

Finally, we inquire, are we entitled to the character expressed in the text? Have we believed in Christ—trusted in him, and do we obey him? Is he formed within us, and are we forming our lives after his model?—a model that essentially embodies the perfection of heaven. If so, we congratulate you upon your return to Christ, and interest in him. Yes, to-day and for ever, he is the same in his nature—his laws, and his love. The immutability of his nature constitutes the guaranty of your happiness—his laws form the rule and measure of your purity; and his love in perpetual fruition, wide as your wants, and lasting as your being, shall meet and fill the immortal longings of the mind, while the radiant splendors of his Godhead shall pour their blended blaze on man's astonished vision for ever and ever!

## SERMON XX.

## FAITH.

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.”—HEB. xi. 39.

IN the great process of spiritual life—of human recovery, FAITH is the first virtue—the first grace of the Spirit that is inserted in the bosom of the Christian penitent. It is the first ray of light that darts athwart the gloom of nature's night. It is the early dawn of life and immortality in the soul of man. It is the first restoring movement—the first recuperative energy that stirs in the breast of him who is “dead in trespasses and sins.” This grace opens and appains the way for the insertion of others. But *this* is the great initial grace that is properly the first-born of all the virtues of the New Testament. Hence, the Scriptures treat it, as the elder member of the whole family of graces. It is *first* on the list—it is at the head of the catalogue. It is the herald—the great precursor of all the other graces and virtues. Hence, the importance attached to it in the Sacred Scriptures. It is *that*, the existence of which, is necessary, in order to the existence of other things. It is the vehicle of transmission for all heavenly impressions upon the human soul. It is the great parent of all good effects, in religion and morals. That is, it is the great evangelical instrument by which all these things are accomplished.

An *object* is defined to be, that about which any power or faculty is employed—something presented to excite any affec-

tion or emotion in the mind *objectively*, and about which the mind is employed. A *subject* is that upon which any action is brought to bear or operate. The subject of *faith* is the matter treated of; while God, who proposes such matter, is the *object* of our faith.

In treating of the subject, we propose,

1. *To consider the importance of faith, as a Christian virtue.*
2. *The Object of faith.*
3. *Its subject.*
4. *Its nature.*
5. *Its offices and work.*
6. *Its range and operation—its trial, triumph, and final reward.*

I. ITS IMPORTANCE.—Faith, in the Scriptures, is made a condition of life—the medium of access to, and bond of fellowship with the Divine majesty. Christianity may, indeed, be of God—may have come from heaven—may be fearfully vested with the characters of truth and righteousness—may be every way adequate to the achievement of the grand errand on which she has visited our world—at once the joy of heaven, and the salvation of earth; but without faith, Christianity can be of no practical advantage to us whatever. “He that believeth not shall be damned.”—“He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life—the wrath of God abideth on him”—“Without faith, it is impossible to please God.” Noah became heir to the righteousness which is by *faith*. Faith or no faith, decides the question of our future destiny. Faith gives certainty to life; and the want of it, gives awful certainty to all the punishments that await the damned. The salvation of man is finally suspended on *good conduct* in life, as a condition; and a good life can only result from faith in Christ. Hence, the importance of faith. Faith

places us in the bosom of God's covenant. The want of it, exposes us to the quarrel—the vengeance of that covenant. God never saved an accountable creature, except by faith; and in all the deep, and desolate tract of hell, there is not a ruined spirit who was not damned for the want of it.

II. ITS OBJECT. The Divine Nature is the *object* of our faith. And as we know nothing of God, but what is contained in the Bible, we must “believe in God,” agreeably to the representations of his word. As God, therefore, represents himself to exist, so we must believe in him; or otherwise, our faith cannot be Christian. And in order to this, we must inquire, *first*, what Jehovah is, *in himself*; *secondly*, what he is, *in relation to us*.

As the only living and true God, in his word, he has revealed himself, as existing in the mysterious distinction of *three* persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But notwithstanding this distinction of persons, the *unity* of the Divine nature is preserved, and everywhere asserted. In power, substance, and majesty, each person in the Divine nature, is equal to the other. Underived, eternal Godhead is possessed, in common, on the part of the *adorable three*, equally, and coevally “bearing record in heaven”—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We insist upon this view of the subject, because without it, the Christian scheme is dissolved like a bubble. We contend, that faith in the Holy Trinity is necessary, because it involves the interests of practical Christianity. Each person, in the undivided essence of Jehovah, is represented as possessing corresponding perfections and dominion; and from the relations of each, collateral, and consecutive duties arise. Deny this mystery, and the relations cease to exist; and the absence of the alleged relations, is at once the destruction of all moral obligation, as taught in the New Testament. If a man can get to heaven, without the belief of this doctrine, the Bible

is not his guide. Hence, early in the Bible, even on its first page, the revelation of this doctrine occurs. So we read, "The *Spirit* of God moved upon the waters."—"Let us make man in *our* image."—Man has become like "*one of us*." We read of the "*Seed of the woman*"—(Jesus Christ.)

The institution of animal sacrifice takes place, by Divine appointment; typically representative of the great Sacrifice of the cross. "In thy seed, (Jesus Christ,) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, and he shall possess the gate of his enemies." The second person in the Divine nature is brought into view, under the denomination of "Shiloh;"—"a prophet,"—"a star in Jacob."

The *Spirit* of the Lord came upon Sampson, Saul, Joshua, Samuel, and others. The *Spirit* of God was sent forth, and a universe sprang into being. His *Spirit* "garnished the heavens."—"Whither shall I flee from thy *Spirit*?" His *Spirit* "formed the crooked serpent." And in this way, the Old Testament in about forty places, makes mention of the *Spirit*, the third person in the adorable Trinity.

The second person in the Divine nature, is distinctly, and characteristically noticed, in between one and two hundred places, in the Old Testament. The same truth is taught us, in all variety of language, in the New Testament.

This leads us to notice the relations existing between God and his creatures. In the work of redemption, God has been represented to exist, according to his own word, in the distinction of three persons. Each person in the unity of the Divine essence, sustains to us, separate, and distinct relations. So, the Father *loves*, the Son *redeems*, and the Spirit *draws*. "God so *loved* the world."—Jesus Christ "*came to seek and to save* that which was lost."—The Spirit "*reproves* the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

In view of this, we are baptized in the awfully mysterious name of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."—"God has sent



forth the *Spirit* of his *Son*.”—“Built upon the foundation of the apostles,” etc. Christ offered himself “through the eternal *Spirit*.”—“To the acknowledgment of the mystery of *God*, and of the *Father*, and of *Christ*.”—“The love of *God the Father*, the fellowship of *the Son*, and communion of *the Holy Ghost*.”—“Now, the Lord direct your hearts, in the love of *God*, and patient waiting for the day of *Jesus Christ*.”—“Grace be unto you, from him which *was*, and which *is*, and which *is to come*; and from the *seven Spirits* which are before the throne; and from *Jesus Christ* the faithful Witness.”—“That the God of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, the *Father of glory*, may grant unto you the *Spirit* of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him.”—“If ye be reproached for the name of *Christ*, happy are ye; for the *Spirit* of glory and of *God* resteth upon you.”—“Declared to be the *Son of God* with power, according to the *Spirit* of holiness.”—“Diversities of gifts—the same *Spirit*.”—“Diversities of administrations—the same *Lord*.”—“Diversities of operations—the same *God* over all.”

Faith, in its legitimate exercise, represents the *Father*, “so loving the world,” that he “sent his *Son*,” etc.—The *Son*, “giving himself for the life of the world;” and the Holy *Spirit* applying the benefits of this redemption, in *enlightening*, *renewing*, and *saving* mankind. If our faith stops short of this, it cannot be saving; for in this, its legitimacy and efficacy consist.

If to this, it should be objected, that the argument militates against the salvation of pious heathen, the reply is, that the same Spirit that dictated these great truths in the Bible, also writes them upon the hearts of those heathen, who are finally to form a part of the general assembly, and church of the first born that are in heaven. The Holy Spirit is consistent with himself; and what he teaches in the Bible, as its grand inspirer, he writes upon the hearts of all who shall finally be

saved. Hence, Christ is "the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men," etc. You might as readily select a tree in the forest that has never been shaken with the wind, as to find, even in the heathen world, one with whom the Spirit of God has never striven, in some way, or to some extent. So that the objection falls; and we exhibit the principle, as a Bible position, that faith in the "Three that bear record in heaven"—"the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," is essential to salvation. Hence, Christ says, "ye believe in *God*, believe also in *me*." So he requires us to believe in *himself*, and on "*Him* who sent him."—"This is eternal life, to know thee, the only *true God*, and *Jesus Christ* whom thou hast sent."—"And *we* will take up *our* abode with him."—"He that believeth on *me*, believeth on *him that sent me*."

To reject the doctrine of the Trinity; that is, not to believe it, is to reject the counsel of God's love, the atonement of his Son, and the agency of the Spirit; and this is to stab the vitals of godliness, and sap the foundations of Christianity. It is to shake the pillars on which the throne of God is based—the august pillars of immutability. God save us from the impious delusion, and give us this faith!

### III. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF FAITH.

The doctrine to be believed is the gospel. "Believe my words," says Jesus Christ. "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth," etc.—"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the *word* of truth, the *gospel* of your salvation."—"In whom also, after ye believed ye were sealed."—The *gospel* is "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."—"King Agrippa, believest thou *the prophets*?"—"Repent and believe the *gospel*."—"These things *were written* that ye might believe."—"I believe thy *command-*

*ments.*”—“Who hath believed our *report*?” Some are damned, “because they believe not the *truth*.”—“Belief of the *truth*.” We read of one who “believed all things *written in the prophets*.”—“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets *have written*.”

The whole of the gospel is to be believed. Every essential, fundamental part. All is entitled to equal credit. The whole is inseparably connected; and cannot be sundered, without rejecting the whole. Each part is connected with the other, forming a general whole; every part entering componently into the well-arranged and universal system. “Light runs into shade, and shade to light.” The foundation supports the superstructure; and the superstructure is built upon the foundation. Undermine a principle, and a continent trembles. Inflict a wound in one part, and pang will vibrate to the extremest nerve in another. A cementing principle pervades the whole system—there is nothing in it centrifugal—no repulsion.—Never did the flute of Aristoxenus, the lute of Apollo, or the lyre of Timotheus, produce greater concord in the agreement of parts, or harmony in the proportion of powers, than does this sacred and holy theme of contemplation. All is accordant as the musical chime of tinkling rills, or the mingling murmurs of the rippling cascade. Such is the gospel; and such the subject-matter of our faith. It is the glory of this world, and the guide to a better. It is a key opening the prison in which we are bound *here*, and *then* appended to the lock of heaven.

IV THE NATURE OF FAITH.—In an important sense, faith is the gift of God. In another view of the subject, it is a Christian virtue.

*First*, it is the gift of God. “According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” “The fruit of the Spirit is faith.” “By the faith of him”—Jesus Christ. “The Au-

thor and Finisher of our faith." "Faith, the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." "Through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Lord, increase our faith." "The faith of the operation of God." God "opened a door of faith." "The faith of God." "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." "To another, faith by the same Spirit." "Faith from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace disposes, and enables us to believe. Faith is a living conviction of God, and of the things of God. No Christian virtue can be exercised without the aid of the Spirit; much less faith,—an initial primary virtue.

Faith is not the bare assent of the understanding to propositions presented to the mind. A man, by acquainting himself with the external evidences of Christianity, may be convinced of its truth; and yet, not be led to the love and service of God. It is possible to "hold the truth in unrighteousness." You consult a system of algebra, and the truth of the various propositions is demonstrated—no room is left for doubt. And so of any other system of science, that admits of demonstration. In the same way, you are convinced of the truth of Christianity; but in addition to this, you have a conviction of the truth of the gospel, produced by *Divine influence*. The Spirit of God, "bears witness with your spirit." God "shines in the heart." The eyes of the understanding are enlightened. "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." "Faith comes by hearing;" but not so as to preclude the notions of faith we have been suggesting. Divine influence accompanies the propositions of truth to the mind. When the obligations of the gospel reach the ear, ordinarily, the grace of God reaches the heart. There is, on the part of the creature, a subjective yielding, and a coöperative effort; an effort, however, that cannot be put forth without the help of God. So our Church teaches; and so all orthodox creeds agree.

Faith is also a moral act of ours—it is a duty—a Christian

virtue. Hence, "He that believeth shall be saved." "He that believeth not, shall be damned." The *ability* is given, and then the *act* is required. Were the work exclusively God's, he would not ask the concurrence of the creature. Faith here, is the result of assistance rendered, and effort made. For example, Christ said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand." The power accompanied the command; and the moment the obligation reached his ear, almighty power arrested his arm, and it revived.

Again, when Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, and said, "Lazarus, come forth," the moment the ear caught the unexpected sound, the pulse of life began to beat in the tomb, and the dead anatomy of Lazarus was restored from the grave. Thus, when the spirit of prophecy cried, in the valley of vision, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord," the Spirit of life, from God out of heaven, began to quicken and revive; and lo! there was a shaking and a coming together, bone to its bone. So, in the matter of believing, the two acts—the presentment of truth to the mind, and the answerable extension of Divine aid to the soul, are instantaneous; and so, we may say, "Hitherto God works, and we work." The creature is Divinely influenced; and yet acts responsibly. The Spirit strives, excites, enlightens; and yet may be *grieved* and *quenched*.

Thus, of faith we would say, it is both a grace of the Spirit, and a virtue of ours. It is the work of God; and it is our work. It is our work; but God must help us to do it. "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." St. Augustine says, "to *have power* to believe, is the prerogative of *all* men; actually to believe, is the prerogative of the faithful." Gregorius Nysæus says, "faith is placed within the reach of our free election or choice." Another ancient Christian says, in his book on the "Vocation of the Gentiles," "As they that have believed are helped to abide in the faith,

so they that have not yet believed, are helped to believe; and as the former have it in their power to *go out*, so the latter have it in their power to *come in*." Faith then is conviction—it is impression—it is knowledge.

#### V. THE WORK AND OFFICES OF FAITH.

First, we are justified *by faith*, as a condition of life. It is one of the grand terms of salvation. Hence, "being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." "The righteousness of God revealed *by faith*." "To him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly." "The righteousness which is *by faith*." "Therefore, we conclude a man is justified *by faith*." "Ye are all the children of God *by faith*." "Thy *faith* hath made thee whole."

It is also *by faith* we are *sanctified*, or *perfected in holiness*. Hence, we read, "The just shall live *by faith*." "Without *faith*, it is impossible to please God." "Full assurance of *faith*." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*." "Sanctified *by faith*." "We live by the *faith* of the Son of God." "Steadfast in the *faith*." "We walk *by faith*, not by sight." Without *faith*, we cannot understand the doctrines of the gospel; we cannot obey its precepts; we can neither love nor serve God. By *faith* all the Christian worthies that have ever lived, and died, and conquered, have been crowned victorious.

Look at the faith of Adam, when he wandered from the garden—Of Abel, the first man that died by the hand of murder—Of Enoch, "of whom the world was not worthy"—Of Abraham, "the father of the faithful"—Of Moses, Joshua, Sampson, Elijah, Elisha—the prophets—the apostles—the early and later ministers—the children of the Reformation—and Christians of all ages!

VI. ITS RANGE AND OPERATION—ITS TRIAL, TRIUMPH, AND FINAL REWARD.

Faith shall produce the prevalence of Christian principles, the world over. It shall change the state of the universe. It shall bless mankind, and restore the world to primeval happiness. It restores the penitent—reclaims the wandering—confirms the humble, and crowns the persevering. Look at Nebuchadnezzar, a monster in nature—Manasseh, in religion—Paul, in persecution—Peter, in apostacy.

Faith stands the fiery trials of life, as the burning bush of Moses did the flames of Horeb—looks at the promises, and conquers—smiles at impossibilities, and says, “it must be done.” Faith has been the great lever that moved the immense redeeming machinery of the moral world, from the conviction of the first offender, down to the birth of the last child in the family of faith. It has been like the river of God to a dying world.

Faith conciliates the favor of Heaven, records my name in the “book of life,” and gives me a title to immortality. It raises the dead, heals the sick, expels demons, reforms the multitude, removes mountains, plucks up sycamores, and restlessly importunes Heaven, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” “By faith the elders obtained a good report. By faith, we understand (or apprehend) the worlds were framed—by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain—Enoch was translated—Noah prepared an ark—Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went; sojourned in the land of Promise, and looked for a city—the youth of the mother of Isaac was renewed—all these died in faith. Abraham offered up Isaac—Isaac blessed Esau and Jacob—Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph—Joseph, when dying, made mention of his bones—Moses was hid by his parents; refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; preferred affliction with the people of God to the pleasures

of sin ; esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; by faith he forsook Egypt, kept the Passover, and passed the Red Sea—By faith the walls of Jericho fell—Rahab perished not—Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained a good report.”

By faith this gospel is preached in Greenland, in Labrador, or in Tartary ; in Hindoostan, in China, in New Holland, in the Isles of the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea—in South America, and the African desert.—The song of salvation echoes along the sides of Taurus, and trembles over the waves of the Ganges—the Bible is making the circuit of the globe—the Esquimaux reads the gospel in his own tongue—the wild inhabitant of the Cuban has dropped his Koran—the poor wanderer of Caffraria listens to the hymn of Bethlehem—light now begins to dawn upon Japan, and the vast regions of idolatry and sin, shall share its meridian splendor or evening lustre,—from Zembla to Cape Horn, churches shall be erected, and the songs of salvation sung.

It was faith that made the crystal mountain on either hand, for the prophet and his pupils to pass—Jonah had this faith, in the bowels of the fish deep in the chambers of the gloomy main.

But look at the triumphs of faith, in the protracted struggle of a religious life—ourselves to conquer, the world and the Devil. In death, faith conquers every difficulty in the way of the Christian—it triumphs over the pains, the groans, the dying strife of man’s departing hour.

The faith of the Christian triumphs in the morning of the resurrection—he is approved by the Judge, in the language of perpetual commemoration, “Come ye blessed of my Father,” etc. He triumphs over the grave, and all the ravages of time—over the dark recesses of corruption and decay—he rests in heaven, though the world is destroyed—the universe is de-



molished, but the good man loses nothing. The benevolent and immutable purpose of God in Christ Jesus, is the guaranty of the believer's happiness; and eternity is the tenure of his bliss—while being *is* and duration *lasts* he shall be happy. Such is the aggregate efficacy of faith. It leads to God. It connects us with him. It perpetuates our interest in the covenant of his mercy. It confirms us in the practice of every virtue. It furnishes the well-accredited prospect of eternal life, in death; and enables the believer to realize this prospect in heaven for ever, where our felicity shall lengthen to infinitude,—where virtue shall no longer struggle with misfortune and pain, and sin shall prevail no more. Faith shall rear herself a monumental pyramid, amidst the wastes of nature and decays of time, in the shade of which, all that is not immortal shall moulder, and around whose heaven-impaling summit, God's own eternity shall play!

Finally, the great register of our faith will continue, unchanged in heaven. There will be a circumstantial modification of the virtue—there will be a subsidence of some of its uses; but in all the important features of its nature and consequence, it will continue for ever. Faith will be exercised in the apprehension and contemplation of the unfolding glories of the Deity, and the future visions of delight to the blest, during the ever-successive roll of interminable ages!

## S E R M O N   X X I

## FUNERAL OF REV. SAMUEL PARKER.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”—PSALM xxxvii. 37.

OUR concern to-day is with the memory of the dead. An eminent minister of Jesus Christ, and servant of the Church, has gone to his reward. We meet this day to commemorate his death, and to revive the recollection of his virtues. We meet to review the life, and contemplate the death of a Christian, saved by the ministry of our holy religion, and made meet for the enjoyment of God in a better world. In order to this, we have selected Psalm 37th and 37th, as the foundation of a funeral discourse. Our object, as the custom of the country informs you, is to benefit the *living*, not the *dead*. The latter are above our praise (confining the remark to the righteous) and beyond our blame. From the relation in which we stand to them, and the estimate placed on their character by eternity, loaded as we are with frailties, subject to infirmities, and tending to the tomb, it becomes us to tread lightly on their ashes.

It is indeed delightful to reflect, that the man on whose funeral we are now attending, at *this time* rests in heaven, and bending from the throne above, observes the business and exercises of the day, with a delighted admiration; and seems to say, with all heaven's inhabitants, “Lose sight of *us*, in view of the *religion* that brought us here!” This, my brethren, shall be our *first* business—some notice of

the *Christian religion*, by which we become "*upright*." *Secondly*, the character of the *perfect man*. *Thirdly* and finally, his *end*. Such is the division of our subject, and we shall now enter upon its discussion, more minutely.

I. In recommending to the attention, and pressing home upon the acceptance of man the subject of revealed religion—the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the *first* consideration claiming our notice, is its *Divine original*. As a system of virtue and happiness—a plan of salvation and recovery, for the guilty sons of men, from everlasting it has existed in the counsels of the Divine mind. As addressed to mankind, it emanated from the throne of God. Heaven was the source of its origination—earth is the sphere of its range and operation.

Christianity exists.—It must have an author or authors; and reason decides that it is the production of either good men or angels, bad men or devils, or else of God. The two former are impossible; the latter, therefore, must be the truth.

"Oh! were it doubtful, 'twould be dearer far  
Than all things *else* most certain,  
And were it false, what truth on earth  
So precious as the lie!"

Our *second* consideration is the necessity of the existence of revealed religion, in order to our salvation. No other plan than the gospel can be efficient in promoting our happiness; for this alone is God's plan; and it is only by the ministry of this religion, that our happiness and salvation can be effected. Other schemes of good—systems ostensibly so, of virtue and happiness, have been tried; and to no purpose. The people have sat, and groped in darkness—they have stumbled upon the dark mountains—they have conjectured, hoped, and dreamed a thousand things about themselves, God, and futurity; and all in vain. No path opening to the throne of

God caught the eye—no voice from the sanctuary of the eternal, fell upon the ear of the wanderer, to tell him,—“This is the way, walk ye in it.” Doubt, uncertainty, and despair, accompanied their footsteps, and were the result of all their inquiries about God and religion. Everywhere, the deluded heathen boasts a god in his pocket, or a score of them in his house! The worlds of nature and of art, teem with the objects of devotion. The Egyptian bows to an ox—the Persian to the sun, and a third to the fire, and so of the whole mythological mummery of the heathen world, comprehending three thousand deities! One system rises on the ruins of another, to be itself the aggrandizement of a third; and all equally forceless and unavailing—“Physicians of no value!” Such, my brethren, is the infirmity of natural religion, unconnected with revealed. It cannot save—the gospel must come to our assistance.

*Thirdly*, we notice the *subject-matter* of revealed religion.—The theme it discusses—the doctrines exhibited, and the duties enforced. We become acquainted with the character of God and man—the history of heaven and earth. The good man fixes his eye on the celestial page; and travels from the period of nature’s birth, down to that of her destination; and converses with all that *is*, that *has been*, or that *will be*. God, in his proper character, is known. He is acknowledged Jehovah, existing in the distinction of three persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The relations of each to us, in the great work of salvation. The electing love of the Father, the sprinkling blood of the Son, and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. The Father plans—the Son procures—the Spirit applies. Love of the Father, fellowship of the Son, communion of the Holy Ghost. God sends his Son; *he* bows to the burden of our atonement, and the Spirit gives practical effect to the calls of repentance.—Our fall and recovery—cardinal points in the history of man’s redemption; the nature

and necessity of regeneration ; Divine support in life and death ; a happy resurrection ; and the joys of heaven.

*Fourth consideration.* *The reasonableness and credibility of the Christian scheme.*

And *first*, the want of such a system of things was acknowledged by the most enlightened heathen of antiquity. Such as Plato, Porphyry, Seneca, and Xenophon.

*Secondly*, the condition of mankind in all ages and nations, without the gospel, loudly speaks the necessity of it.

*Thirdly*, the gospel is available, in effecting the object in view ; namely, the happiness of man. And hence, it is reasonable that God should furnish man with such a system of things ; inasmuch as the benevolence of his nature, disposes him to promote his own glory, by the recovery and happiness of our species. And in doing this, God certainly has a right to select his own method of doing what is, originally and properly, his work ; and any scheme, the subject of adoption with him, and efficient in the accomplishment of our recovery, cannot be thought unreasonable.

The *credibility* of the gospel is a subject that affords equal interest. It comes to us well accredited. Its evidences are incontestable. It is supported by every description of proof, of which any proposition in nature is susceptible. Arguments the most natural, intuitive, and resistless, present themselves to the mind—address themselves to the understanding and the heart, evincive of the truth of our holy religion. On this subject, in dreadful reality, the kingdoms of nature and grace—the voice of God and man—and the common language of heaven, earth, and hell *agree*. The gospel is of God—Christianity came from heaven !

*Fifth consideration.*—The gospel has been confirmed and illustrated, in the order of the Divine government, from the loss of Paradise to the present time. The prophecies of Christianity have been fulfilled, her promises performed, and

her threatenings executed. Mark her triumphs, in the fulfilment of predictions relating to the coming and kingdom of Christ! Promises of good to the righteous,—and the threatening stroke of the Almighty executed upon the wicked!

*Sixth consideration.*—Christianity affords Divine conviction of her truth and origin—convinces of sin—changes the nature of man—gives the witness of the Spirit, and abides with the Christian always. Such is the confidence—such the assurance of the good man. He *knows* that he is of God.

*Finally, the efficacy of the gospel.* It furnishes us with grace here, and glory hereafter. It is the salvation of earth, and the joy of heaven—glory and happiness present, and to all eternity! Pursue it! Mark its influences throughout the wide extent of a regenerated world! Waste and desolation carried into the regions of hell, and heaven filled with inhabitants! The blessedness of the resurrection, and the glory of heaven!

II. *Character of the upright man, or Christian.*—His natural state—his illumination—his renewal—his belief of the truth—his creed and faith—his graces and virtues—his practical conduct in life—his piety to God, duty to himself, and love of others—his industry, devotedness, and perseverance. He endures to the end—his course is fixed and onward. He hastens to work while the day lasts. He looks back without regret, and forward without fear.

III. *His end.*—He dies in “peace;” and the happy soul in joyful flight wings her ascending way to the peaceful mansions of long and blest eternity! The Christian dies in “peace”—no fear arrests—no dread appalls—joy and peace in possession, and heaven in prospect—grace *now* and glory *soon*! Serenely calm—sweetly recumbent on the bosom of his God, the good man expires! “On the cold cheek of

death smiles and roses are blending," and in transporting prospect, "beauty immortal awakes from the tomb." His end in heaven is "peace." From all the disturbing toils of life,—the heart, now flourishing in the celestial Paradise above, is no longer wounded by the society of the pricking brier and grieving thorn! The tempest and ills of time, the tumult and sorrow of life, all have subsided; and to these have succeeded the joys of an eternal heaven—an unmolested residence in the kingdom of God for ever!

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#### BRIEF NOTICE OF THE LABORS OF REV SAMUEL PARKER.

HE took the pulpit as a minister in 1805; and travelled Hinkston Circuit. In 1806, Lexington Circuit. In 1807, he was admitted to Deacon's orders and ordained; and was appointed to the charge of Limestone Circuit. In 1808, he travelled Miami Circuit. In 1809, he was ordained Elder, and appointed Presiding Elder of the Indiana District, Western Conference. In 1810,—11,—12, he continued here. In 1813, he travelled Deer Creek Circuit, Ohio. In 1814, he presided on the Miami District. In 1815, he presided on the Kentucky District, where he remained till the autumn of 1818, when he removed with his family to the South, having received, previously, an appointment as Presiding Elder of the Mississippi District, Mississippi Conference. Here in December of 1819, the immortal Parker fell a victim to disease, and went home to heaven!

Independently of these ministerial charges, during a period of about fifteen years, the extra travelling and preaching of this great and good man, were considerable. In 1812, he visited New York, as a delegate from the West in the General

Conference. In 1816, he is again a member of the General Conference held in Baltimore, May the first. During this summer, immediately after his return from the eastward, he married Miss Tilton, daughter of the Rev. Richard Tilton, of Mason county, Kentucky. But this did not deter him from attending to his usual itinerations, as a Methodist travelling preacher. He persisted in the laudable enterprise of doing good, until, unfortunately for the Church, he fell a martyr to his work, and went to his reward.

In preaching the gospel, as a deputed herald to announce the tidings of salvation to an astonished universe, wherever he could reach, he travelled from the shores of Canada, exploring everywhere the forests of the West, to the sequestered wilds of the Arkansas. Wherever he went, he bore a friendly voice to the listening ear—he reared a tower of hope before the anxious eye! A successor of the apostles, wherever he preached, he sustained the majesty of the pulpit, and left behind him the sound of his Master's feet! In this great business, Parker travelled more than twice the geographical distance round the world! Whenever he visited them, the "wilderness and solitary places were glad"—the harps of Zion flung to the listening breeze their sweet and sacred melody!—The earth became the garden of God!—the rose of Sharon was planted—trees of righteousness flourished—the seed of immortal life was sown over the vast desert of man—the light of truth appeared—the raptures of devotion were kindled upon the altars of a thousand hearts! He loved the souls of men, and disinterestedly labored to do them good. His ministry, under God, was the joy of multitudes on earth, and no doubt the salvation of many in heaven. Let us tread in his footsteps, that with him we may share the glory and grandeur of eternity!

THE END.





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